

A Comprehensive commentary on the Holy Quran



(Surah Maryam To Surah Ar-Rum)

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MA'ĀRIFUL-QUR'ĀN

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(Sūrah Maryam, Ṭahā, Al-Anbiyā', Al-Ḥajj, Al-Mu'minūn, An-Nūr, Al-Furqān, Ash-Shu'arā', An-Naml, Al-Qaṣaṣ, Al-Ankabūt, Ar-Rūm)

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preface

الحمدلله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم
وعلى آله وصحبه اجمعين

By the grace of Allah Subḥānahu Ta'ālā we are now able to present the sixth volume of Ma'ariful-Qur'ān. Keeping in view the length of work we had decided to divide it between a number of translators, and this sixth volume was entrusted to my learned brother Mr. Muḥammad Ishrat Ḥussain who has accomplished the task with ability and devotion. This volume is entirely translated by him and after my revision and editing it is now being presented to the readers .

Acknowledgements are due to Maulānā 'Abdullāh Memon and Qārī 'Abdur Rashīd who have contributed in connection with Arabic text, and Mr. Rafat Saghir Farooqui who contributed to the proof reading of the final text, and also to Mr. Yūsuf Ghanī who helped me in several respects, particularly in proof reading, preparing the index and in supervising the process of composing.

May Allah bless all these brothers with the best of rewards both here and in the hereafter, and make this work beneficial for the Ummah.

Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī

TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter	English Transliteration
ا	الف -- Alif	a
ب	باء -- bā	b
ت	تاء -- tā	t
ث	ثاء -- thā	th
ج	جيم -- jīm	j
ح	حاء -- ḥā	ḥ
خ	خاء -- khā	kh
د	دال -- dāl	d
ذ	ذال -- dhāl	dh
ر	راء -- rā	r
ز	زاى -- zā	z
س	سين -- sīn	s
ش	شين -- shīn	sh
ص	صاد -- ṣād	ṣ
ض	ضاد -- ḍād	ḍ
ط	طاء -- ṭā	ṭ
ظ	ظاء -- ẓā	ẓ
ع	عين -- 'ayn	'
غ	غين -- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء -- fā	f
ق	قاف -- qāf	q
ك	كاف -- kāf	k
ل	لام -- lām	l
م	ميم -- mīm	m
ن	نون -- nūn	n
ه	هاء -- hā	h
و	واؤ -- wāw	w
ء	همزه -- Hamzah	'
ى	ياء -- yā	y

Short Vowels

	: Fatḥah	a
	: Kasrah	i
	: Ḍammah	u

Long Vowels

ا	: Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ىِ	: Maddah Yā	ī
وُ	: Maddah Wāw	ū

Dipthongs

اى	:Alif and Yā	ay (also ai in some cases)
او اؤ	: Alif and Wāw	aw (also au in some cases)

Sūrah Maryam

(Mary)

Sūrah Maryam was revealed in Makkah and it has 98 Verses and 6 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful the Very-Merciful

Verses 1- 15

كٓهٰيٰعٓصٓ ﴿١﴾ ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهٗ زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ
نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا ﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىْ وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّىْ وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّاْسُ شَيْبًا
وَّلَمْ اَكُنْۢ بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَاِنِّىْ خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِىَ مِنْ
وَّرَآءِىْ وَكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِىْ عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِىْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥﴾ يَّرِثُنِىْ
وَيَرِثُ مِنْ اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ ۖ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ﴿٦﴾ يٰزَكَرِيَّآ اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ
بِغُلٰمِ ۣاسْمُهٗ يَحْيٰى ۙ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اَنّٰى
يَكُوْنُ لِىْ غُلٰمٌ وَّكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِىْ عَاقِرًا وَّقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا
﴿٨﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ وَّقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّىْٓ اٰيَةً ؕ قَالَ اٰيَتُكَ اَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ
النَّاسَ ثَلٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿١٠﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلٰى قَوْمِهٖ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ
فَاَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْهِمْ اَنْ سَبِّحُوْا بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾ يٰيَحْيٰى خُذِ الْكِتٰبَ
بِقُوَّةٍ ؕ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ﴿١٢﴾ وَّحَنَانًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكٰوةً ؕ وَكَانَ
تَقِيًّا ﴿١٣﴾ وَّبَرًّۢا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴿١٤﴾ وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَيْهِ

يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿١٥﴾

Kaf, Hā Yā, 'Ain, Sad [1] **This is a narration of your Lord's mercy to His servant Zakariyyā,** [2] **When he called his Lord in a low voice.** [3] **He said, "My Lord, here I am that bones within me have turned feeble, and the head has flared up grey with old age, and I never remained My Lord, unanswered in my prayer to You.** [4] **And I fear (my) kins after me, and my wife is barren, so bless me with an heir, from Your own side,** [5] **who inherits me and inherits the house of Ya'qūb. And make him, O my Lord, a favorite one."** [6]

(Allah said) "O Zakariyyā, We give you the good news of a boy whose name is Yaḥyā (John). We did not create any one before him of the same name." [7] **He Said, "My Lord, how shall there be a boy for me while my wife is barren and I have reached the extreme of old age?"** [8]

He said, "So it is; your Lord said 'it is easy for Me, and I did create you before, when you were nothing.'" [9] **He said, "My Lord, make for me a sign." He said, "Your sign is that you will not (be able to) speak to the people for three (consecutive) nights, though fit."** [10]

Then he came out to his people from the place of prayer and directed them by gestures to proclaim the purity of Allah at morning and evening. [11]

(When the child was born, Allah said to him,) "O Yaḥyā", hold on to the Book firmly." And We gave him wisdom, while still a child, [12] **and love from our own, and purity; and he was God-fearing,** [13] **and he was good to his parents; and he was not oppressive nor disobedient.** [14] **And peace on him the day he was born, the day he dies and the day he will be raised alive.** [15]

Commentary

In the Holy Qur'ān Sūrah Maryam has been placed immediately after Sūrah Al-Kahf, presumably because there appears some kind of similarity between the two Sūrahs. While the former deals with some unusual anecdotes, the latter also covers a number of extraordinary events.

كٓهٰيٰعٓصٓ are letters known in Arabic as حُرُوْفِ مُقَطَّعَه whose meanings, like

مُتَشَابِهَات are known only to Allah Ta'ālā and people should not even attempt to probe their meanings.

نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا (a low voice - 19:3) tells us that it is better to beseech Allah in supplication in undertone. Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said.

ان خيرالذكر الخفى، وخير الرزق ما يكفى

"Surely the best way to make supplication to Allah is in undertone and the best sustenance is that which is sufficient for one's needs (i.e. neither more nor less than required)" (Qurṭubī)

اِنِّیْ وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّیْ وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّاْسُ شَیْبًا

"Here I am that bones within me have turned feeble, and the head has flared up grey with old age." - 19:4

Human body becomes weak with the aging of bones, because it is the bones which keep the body firm and upright. When bones lose their strength, the whole body turns weak.

The literal meaning of اِشْتِعَال is a sudden burst of fire. Here the word is used as a simile for grey hair covering the head like a glow of fire.

Mention of one's needs in supplication is desirable

Here Sayyidnā Zakariyya عليه السلام before making his supplication, mentioned about his weakness and old age by referring to his bones . One of the reasons for this was, as pointed out in the translation, that in his peculiar circumstances i.e. his old age and physical weakness, it was not appropriate for him to ask for a child. Another reason given by Imām Qurṭubī in his commentary is, that for possible acceptance of supplication it is better to mention one's weakness, destitution and inadequacy. For this reason religious scholars have emphasized that one should recount Allah Ta'ālā's blessings and his own exigency before making his supplication.

مَوَالِی is the plural of مولی. This word has many meanings in the Arabic language, one of them being a cousin, or other relations on the father's side. Here the word has been used in this sense.

The Legacy of Prophets cannot be inherited

يَّرِثُنِیْ وَيَرِثُ مِنْ اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ

"Who inherits me and inherits the house of Ya'qūb." - 19:6.

The religious scholars are all agreed that here the inheritance does not mean wealth, because in the first place, it has not been established that Sayyidnā Zakariyyā ﷺ had much wealth. Hence, the question as to who would inherit the same, does not arise. Secondly, it is inconsistent with the exalted position of a prophet to concern himself with such matters. And thirdly, a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, which has been unanimously accepted by all religious scholars, says:

إن العلماء ورثة الأنبياء، وان الانبياء لم يورثوا دينارا ولادرهما انما ورثوا العلم، فمن اخذه اخذ بحظ وافر. (رواه احمد وأبو داؤد و ابن ماجة والترمذى)

"Indeed the knowledgeable scholars are the inheritors of the prophets, because the prophets do not leave any material wealth. Their legacy is knowledge. One who has acquired knowledge has received great fortune."

The above saying of the Prophet ﷺ is also recorded in Al-Kāfī, by Al-Kulainī, the well-known book of the Shī'ite school. It is narrated in Sahīh Al-Bukhari through Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

لا نورث، ماتركنا صدقة

"No one inherits our (i.e. prophets') wealth, because whatever wealth we leave behind is Ṣadaqah (Charity) (صدقه)."

In the verse itself after يَرِثُنِىْ the addition of the words يَرِثُ مِنْ اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ (19:6) confirms the view that here the material inheritance is not implied, because the son, Yaḥyā ﷺ, could not have inherited the material wealth of the family of Sayyidnā Ya'qūb ﷺ, which could only be inherited by their near relations and not by Sayyidnā Yaḥyā ﷺ. It is against the law of inheritance for distant relations to receive any part of inheritance in the presence of close relatives.

Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī quotes the following from Al-Kāfī, by Al-Kulainī, the well-known Shī'ah scholar:

عن ابى البخترى عن ابى عبدالله قال: إن سليمان ورث داؤد وإن محمّدا صلى الله عليه وسلم ورث سليمان۔

"Sulaymān ﷺ was the heir of Dāwūd ﷺ and Muḥammad ﷺ was the heir of Sulaymān ﷺ."

It is quite obvious that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not inherit any material wealth from Sulaymān ﷺ, nor did Sulaymān ﷺ receive any

such inheritance from Dāwūd عليه السلام. Clearly the reference here is to the wisdom and the knowledge which all prophets of Allah possess.

لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا

"We did not create any one before him of the same name." - 19:7.

The word سَمِیٌّ means "person having the same name." It also means "similar." If the first meaning is adopted here then it would suggest that no one else had the name Yaḥyā before him. This fact also suggests that he possessed certain special attributes which were not granted to any one else before him. And if we take the second meaning of the word سَمِیٌّ then it will mean that some of his attributes and situations were such that they were peculiar to him and were not shared by any other prophet, and that he was unique in the possession of those special attributes, for instance his self abnegation and denial of worldly comforts (حَصُوْر). However, it does not necessarily follow that he was superior to all the prophets who preceded him, for the superiority of Sayyidnā Ibrahīm Khalīlullāh and Sayyidnā Mūsa Kalīmullāh عليهما السلام over him is established and well known. (Maẓharī)

The word عِتِيًّا is derived from عتو which actually means 'unresponsive' or 'insensitive', and in the present context it means dryness of the bones. سَوِيًّا means healthy. This word has been added here to denote that Sayyidnā Zakariyyā's عليه السلام loss of speech for three days was not due to any illness, for during this entire period of three days he could utter words of prayer and supplication. This special condition was a miracle and a sign from Allah Ta'ālā about his wife's pregnancy. حَنَانًا Literal meaning of this word is softheartedness, compassion and mercy, and these qualities were specially granted to Sayyidnā Yaḥyā عليه السلام.

Verses 16 - 21

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَرْيَمَ ۘ اِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ اَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿۱۶﴾ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ حِجَابًا ۖ فَاَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهَا رُوْحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿۱۷﴾ قَالَتْ اِنِّيْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْكَ اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿۱۸﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا رَسُوْلُ رَبِّكِ ۖ لِاَهَبَ لَكِ غُلٰمًا زَكِيًّا ﴿۱۹﴾

قَالَتْ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لِىْ غُلٰمٌ وَّلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِىْ بَشَرٌ وَّلَمْ اَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿۲۰﴾
قَالَ كَذٰلِكِ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ ۚ وَلِنَجْعَلَهٗۤ اٰيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا ۚ وَكَانَ اَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿۲۱﴾

And mention in the Book (the story of) Maryam, when she withdrew from her people to a place eastwards, [16] **then she used a barrier to hide herself from them. Then, We sent to her Our Spirit and he took before her the form of a perfect human.** [17] **She said, "I seek refuge with the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) against you if you are God-fearing.** [18] **He said, "I am but a message-bearer of your Lord (sent) to give you a boy, purified."** [19] **She said, "How shall I have a boy while no human has ever touched me nor have I ever been unchaste?"** [20] **He said, "So it is; your Lord said, 'It is easy for Me, and (We will do this) so that We make it a sign for people and a mercy from Us. And this is something already destined.' "** [21]

Commentary

The word اِنْتَبَذَتْ is derived from نَبَذ which means to throw away or to cast away. Hence, the meaning of اِنْتِبَاذ is to withdraw from the crowd. مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا denotes that she retired to a secluded corner of the house facing east. The purpose of her shifting to a secluded corner of the house has been differently explained. Some say she had moved there to take a bath, while others say that she had moved as usual to a secluded corner on the eastern side of her place of worship for offering her prayers. Qurṭubī has given preference to the second explanation. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, this is the reason why the Christians face east when offering their prayers, and revere the eastern direction.

فَاَرْسَلْنَا اِلَيْهَا رُوْحَنَا

"Then, We sent to her Our Spirit." - 19:17.

A majority of scholars hold the view that رُوْح (Spirit) refers to Sayyidnā Jibra'īl ﷺ but some say that it refers to Sayyidnā 'Īsā ﷺ himself. Allah Ta'ālā had placed before Sayyidah Maryam ﷺ the likeness of the son to be born to her. But the former version is more appropriate and is confirmed by the statement that follows.

فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا

"He took before her the form of a perfect human." - 19:17.

It is not given to a human being to see an angel in its real form, because he will be overwhelmed by fright at such an experience. This, indeed is, that happened to The Holy Prophet ﷺ in the cave of Ḥirā' on his first encounter with Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام, and again later on. Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام appeared before Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام in the form of a man, so as not to frighten her. When Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام saw a man near her she became apprehensive of his intentions and said اِنِّیٓ اَعُوْذُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْکَ "I seek refuge of the Raḥmān (All-Merciful), against you." (19:18) Some reports have it that when Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام heard these words he retreated a little in reverence of Allah's name.

اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا

"If you are God-fearing." - 19:18.

These are the words which a helpless person would utter to a cruel oppressor begging him that if he is a believer then he should desist from tormenting him. The intention is that Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام entreated Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام, who stood before her in the guise of a man, that he should fear Allah and abstain from evil deeds. In short, the expression اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا (if you are God-fearing - 19:18) is not a pre-condition for seeking the protection of Allah but a condition to make her prayer more effective and inducing. Some other commentators have said that this expression is used for emphasis, meaning that even if you fear Allah I seek His protection; and if the position is otherwise then I shall seek Allah's refuge with added vehemence. (Maẓharī)

لِاَهَبَ لَكِ غُلٰمًا (to give you a boy - 19:19) Here Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام had attributed to himself the gift of the child because Allah Ta'ālā had sent him in order that he should breathe into her collar, and this breath would be the means of her conceiving the child, whereas in reality this gift was by the act of Allah.

Verse 22 - 26

فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهٖ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿۲۲﴾ فَاَجَآءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ اِلٰى

جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ۚ قَالَتْ يٰلَيْتَنِىْ مِتُّ قَبْلَ هٰذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسْيًا مَّنْسِيًّا

﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادٰىهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَآ اَلَّا تَحْزَنِىْ قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا

﴿٢٤﴾ وَهُزِّىْٓ اِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾

فَكُلِىْ وَاشْرَبِىْ وَقَرِّىْ عَيْنًا ۚ فَاِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ اَحَدًا ۙ فَقُوْلِىْٓ اِنِّىْ

نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ اُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ اِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾

So she conceived him, and went in seclusion with him to a remote place. [22] **Then the labour pains brought her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said "O that I would have died before this and been something gone, forgotten."** [23] **Then he called her from beneath her: "Grieve not. Your Lord has placed a stream beneath you.** [24] **And shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards yourself and, it will drop upon you ripe fresh dates.** [25] **So eat, drink and cool your eyes. Then if you see any human being, say (to him), "I have vowed a fast (of silence) for The Raḥmān (All-Merciful), and therefore, I shall never speak to any human today."** [26]

Commentary

Injunction in respect of desire for death

If her desire for death was due to worldly problems then she may be excused on the ground that she was overpowered by the surrounding circumstances and had reached a state of mind usually called by the mystics as غلبة الحال "Ghalabah-tul-Ḥāl." But if the desire for death was due to religious consideration, it was justifiable in its own right, because she feared that people would talk ill of her and she would not be able to endure it with patience. This could be tantamount to committing a sin of showing impatience and only death could save her from such a predicament..

The vow of silence has been prohibited under the Islamic Law

Before the advent of Islam silence was also a form of worship, and those who observed this fast were not supposed to speak from dawn to dusk. Islam cancelled this fast and made it mandatory to refrain from idle talk, lying and back-biting. Refraining from normal conversation is not a

form of worship in Islam anymore and hence to take a vow of silence is also not permissible. Abū Dāwūd رحمة الله عليه has reported the following Ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

لایتم بعد احتلام، ولا صمات یوم الی اللیل

It means that a child who has lost his father may not be regarded as an orphan after attaining puberty, and the rules pertaining to an orphan cease to apply on him. And that remaining silent from dawn to dusk is not a form of worship in Islam (This Ḥadīth has been rated by As-Suyūṭī and Al-'Azizi as Ḥasan).

She has been directed to eat the dates because it has been established medically that the use of water and dates gives relief in labour pains.

Conceiving a child without copulation with a man is not totally impossible

That Sayyidah Maryam علیها السلام conceived and gave birth to a child was a miracle. And miracles, however improbable they may be in appearance, are not beyond Allah's power, rather, the more improbable they are, the more pronounced their miraculous nature. However, it cannot be taken as totally impossible, because according to some books of medical science, the lubricants found inside the female genitals are not merely a passive agent for conceiving a child; they also have a capacity of being active and a potential to make fetus by themselves without an external semen joining them. Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), the famous medical scientist, has mentioned in his book 'Al-Qānūn' that in a special disease, named by him as 'Raja' an imperfect form of even the organs of a fetus is shaped in the uterus of a woman without the intermediation of a male semen. So long as this potential is there, it cannot be taken as totally impossible, because some abnormal factor may increase this potential.

In verse 25 Allah Ta'ālā commanded Sayyidah Maryam علیها السلام to shake the date tree, although it was within His power to drop the dates in her lap. But here the suggestion is that one should strive to earn one's living, and that the struggle for sustenance does not conflict with one's trust in Allah (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

سَرِیًّا The literal meaning of the word سَرِی appearing in verse 24 is a small canal. Allah Ta'ālā caused a small stream to flow at the moment

either by his direct command or through Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام. There are reports supporting both these probabilities. It is worth noting here that while describing the means to bring consolation to Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام water was mentioned first and then date as something to eat. But in the matter of their actual use the order was reversed i.e. eating was enjoined first and then drinking. It is perhaps because normally a person first makes arrangement for drinking water and then for food, specially such food as is more likely to produce thirst. But when it comes to their use the sequence gets reversed i.e. one eats first and then drinks water. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

Verses 27 - 33

فَاَتَتْ بِهٖ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهٗ ؕ قَالُوْا يٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾
يٰٓاُخْتَ هٰرُوْنَ مَا كَانَ اَبُوْكِ امْرَاَ سَوْءٍ وَّمَا كَانَتْ اُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾
فَاَشَارَتْ اِلَيْهِ ؕ قَالُوْا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِى الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾
قَالَ اِنِّىْ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اٰتٰنِىَ الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلَنِىْ نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَّجَعَلَنِىْ
مُبٰرَكًا اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ ۪ وَاَوْصٰنِىْ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا
﴿٣١﴾ وَّبَرًّا ۢ بِوَالِدَتِىْ ۫ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِىْ جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالسَّلٰمُ
عَلَىَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُّ وَيَوْمَ اَمُوْتُ وَيَوْمَ اُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾

Then she came to her people carrying him (the baby). They said, "O Maryam you have come out with something grave indeed. [27] **O sister of Hārūn, neither your father was a man of evil nor was your mother unchaste."** [28] **So she pointed towards him (the baby). They said, "How shall we speak to someone who is yet a child in the cradle?"** [29] **Spoke he (the baby), "Verily I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet,** [30] **and He has made me a blessed one wherever I be, and has enjoined Ṣalāh and Zakāh upon me as long as I am alive,** [31] **and (He has made me) good to my mother, and he did not make me oppressive nor ill-fated.** [32] **And peace is upon me the day I was born, the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised**

alive again." [33]

Commentary

فَاَتَتْ بِهٖ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهٗ

"Then she came to her people carrying him." - 19:27

These words suggest that when Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام was comforted by the super-natural indications that Allah Ta'ālā will protect her from disgrace, she took the newborn baby with her to her house. As to the time when she returned home after giving birth to the child, Ibn 'Asa'akir has narrated through Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that she returned home to her people forty days after the birth of the child i.e. after the completion of the period of *Nifās* (the bleeding period after the birth of a child). (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا (Something grave indeed - 19:27). The word فَرِى in Arabic language means to cut or to split, and is used to describe a task where a great deal of cutting and chopping is involved. However, Abū Ḥayyan has said that the word فَرِى means anything having preposterous and extraordinary significance, and may be used both in good and in bad sense. In the present context it is used to describe something monstrous, hence translated in the text as 'something grave'. Generally this word is used for things which are known to be bad and corrupt in the extreme.

يٰٓاُخْتَ هٰرُوْنَ (O sister of Hārūn - 19:28). Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ, who was the brother and companion of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had died centuries before Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام time. It is obvious, therefore, that in verse 28 where Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام is addressed as the sister of Sayyidnā Hārūn cannot be in its literal sense. This is also corroborated by the incident that when The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent Sayyidnā Mughīrah Ibn Shu'bah ﷺ as his ambassador to the people of Najrān they questioned him that in the Qur'ān Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام has been referred to as the sister of Sayyidnā Hārūn whereas he had died long before her. Sayyidnā Mughīrah ﷺ did not know the answer to this question. So, when he returned from the mission, he narrated the whole incident to The Holy Prophet ﷺ. On this The Holy Prophet ﷺ said why did you not tell them that it has been a common practice with the believers to adopt the names of the prophets in expectation of receiving their Barakah (blessings), and to claim relationship with them. (Aḥmad,

Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī)

This saying of the Prophet ﷺ may be interpreted in two ways. One, that Sayyidah Maryam's عليها السلام relationship with Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام was mentioned because she was of his lineage, and it was customary with the Arabs to associate a person with their ancestors, for instance a man belonging to the tribe of Tamīm would be called as Akhā Tamīm or Tamīm's brother, or an Arab would be addressed as Akhā Arab. The other meaning is that the name Hārūn does not refer to Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام the companion / brother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام but to the brother of Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام herself who was also named after Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام out of reverence for the Prophet. In the second case the term Hārūn أُخْتَ هَارُوْنَ (Sister of Hārūn) fits in very well with the literal meaning of the word أُخت (Sister).

مَا كَانَ أَبُوْكِ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ

"Neither your father was a man of evil." - 19:28.

These words suggest that when someone who is descended from righteous and pious ancestors commits a sin, then the sin is of greater magnitude compared to a sin committed by an ordinary person, because the sin brings bad name to the pious elders. It is for this reason that descendants of pious persons should make extra effort in the performance of righteous deeds, and fear Allah at all times.

إِنِّى عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ ("I am the servant of Allah" - 19:30) There is a report that when her family members started berating and censuring Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام was sucking milk. When he heard their accusations he stopped sucking milk and moved over to his left side facing them, and raising his index finger he said: إِنِّى عَبْدُاللّٰهِ i.e. I am the servant of Allah. In this way in his very first words Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام made it clear that although his birth was a miracle, he himself was not God, but only a servant of God. This was to eliminate forever the possibility of people worshipping him as God due to his miraculous birth.

اٰتٰنِىَ الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلَنِىْ نَبِيًّا

"He has given me the Book and made me a prophet." - 19:30.

In these words, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام even in his infancy announced his future prophethood and the revelation to him of a sacred book from Allah

Ta'ālā. Since no prophet has been granted prophethood and a sacred book before the age of forty years, therefore this pre-announcement of his prophethood by Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام here means to convey in advance that he would be bestowed prophethood and the Book at the proper time. In a similar manner The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that he was bestowed prophethood even before Ādam عليه السلام was yet in the process of his creation. This shows that the promise for granting prophethood to Sayyidnā Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ was firm and final. Here too, because of the certainty of occurrence, the grant of prophethood is referred to in the past tense. By announcing his future prophethood he (Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام) dispelled peoples' doubts and exonerated his mother from the charge of fornication, because his being a Prophet was proof enough that his birth was free from any blemish.

وَأَوْصٰنِي بِالصَّلوٰةِ وَالزَّكوٰةِ

"And has enjoined Ṣalāh and Zakāh upon me." - 19:31.

The word أَوْصَانِي is derived from the word وَصِيَّة (*Waṣiyyah*) which normally means 'to bequeath', but when used in the context of issuing an order, it implies an emphatic command, and here it is used to put emphasis on a command of Allah. For this reason it is translated in the text as 'enjoined'. Here Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام has said that Allah Ta'ālā had commanded him to offer Prayers and give the obligatory charity (Zakāḥ), the intention being that he was commanded to observe both these duties with great diligence. Prayers and Zakāh are two forms of worship which have been enjoined as obligatory in the Shar'īah (Laws) of all the prophets from Ādam عليه السلام to the last of the Prophets, Muḥammad ﷺ. However, their details vary in different codes. In the Shar'īah of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام prayers and Zakāh were also made compulsory. It is true that 'Īsā عليه السلام was never wealthy; neither did he build a house for himself nor did he accumulate any material riches, then why was he enjoined to pay Zakāh? The answer is that this injunction is of general application in that whosoever possesses a certain level of wealth (نِصَاب) is liable to pay Zakāh. This injunction applied to 'Īsā عليه السلام as well i.e. whenever he acquired wealth upto the level of Nisāb (نِصَاب) he was required to pay Zakāh, but if his wealth remains below Niṣāb throughout his life, he would never be liable to pay Zakāh. This situation, therefore, is not in conflict with the general rules governing Zakāh.

مَادُمْتُ حَيًّا

"As long as I am alive." - 19:31.

It means that the injunction of prayers and Zakāh is for ever i.e. as long as I live. It is obvious that the reference here is to the life in this world, because these duties can be performed only here in this world.

وَبَرًّام بِوَالِدَتِىْ

"and (He has made me) good to my mother." - 19:32.

Here only the mother is mentioned and not both the parents. Hence it is implied that his birth was a miracle, being without a father. Such a discourse coming from an infant was a miracle by itself to prove his miraculous birth.

Verses 34 - 40

ذٰلِكَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ج قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِىْ فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ لا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ط اِذَا قَضٰى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَه كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَبِّىْ وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ط هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْ م بَيْنِهِمْ ج فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ اَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَ اَبْصِرْ لا يَوْمَ يَاْتُوْنَنَا لٰكِنِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ الْيَوْمَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَاَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ اِذْ قُضِىَ الْاَمْرُ م وَهُمْ فِىْ غَفْلَةٍ وَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْاَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَاِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ ع

That is 'Īsā, the son of Maryam - the word of truth in which they are disputing. [34] **It is not for Allah to have a son. Pure is He. When He decides a thing He simply says to it, "Be" and it comes to be.** [35] **And Allah is surely my Lord and your Lord. So, worship Him. This is the straight path.** [36] **Then the groups among them fell in dispute. So, woe to the disbelievers, for they are to witness the Great Day.** [37] **How strong will their**

hearing be, and how strong their vision the day they will come to Us! But today the transgressors are in clear error. [38] **And warn them of The Day of Remorse when the whole thing will be settled, while they are heedless and do not believe.** [39] **Surely We, only We, shall ultimately own the earth and all those on it, and to Us they will be returned.** [40]

Commentary

ذٰلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

"This is 'Īsā, the son of Maryam." - 19:34.

The beliefs of the Jews and the Christians about Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام were on such opposite extremes that the Christians exalted him to such a level of reverence that they regarded him as the son of Allah. The Jews on the other hand, denigrated him maliciously and called him (God forbid) the illegitimate son of Yūsuf (Joseph) the carpenter. Allah Ta'ālā has pointed out the error of both the views in these verses and clarified the correct position.

The phrase قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ (translated in the text as 'the word of truth' in the normal reading is with *fatḥah* (َ) on the letter *Lām*. In this case the sentence alongwith its understood words will run like اَقُوْلُ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ that is, 'I say the word of truth'. However, in some readings the letter '*Lām*' in 'Qawl' is rendered with *Ḍammah* (ُ) i.e. قَوْلُ الْحَقِّ. In this case the sentence will mean that Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام himself was a word of truth. It is, then, analogous to the title of كَلِمَةُ اللّٰهِ (the word of Allah) which is given to him to denote that he was born directly by the word of Allah, having no connection with an apparent cause in this world. (Qurṭubī)

يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ (the Day of Remorse) in verse 39 refers to the Day of Judgment and has been called the Day of Remorse because on that day persons consigned to Hell as punishment for their evil deeds will regret their disregard of the righteous way of life, and wish that if they had lived the life of true believers, they too would have been in Paradise instead of being punished in Hell. Even those who have been rewarded with Paradise will feel a different kind of remorse. Al-Ṭabarānī and Abū Ya'lā have quoted the following saying of the Prophet ﷺ on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'adh رضي الله عنه :

"The people of Paradise will regret only one thing, namely those moments which were spent without the remembrance of Allah."

And Al-Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى, has narrated quoting Abū Hurairah ﷺ that The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"Everyone will experience remorse and regret after death."

The companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him what would be that remorse and regret about? Then The Holy Prophet ﷺ explained that those who acted righteously will regret not having performed more righteous deeds which would have helped them attain a higher position in Paradise. On the other hand, the evil doers will repent their evil actions and sins. (Maẓharī)

Verses 41 - 50

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ط اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٤١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰۤاَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْكَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٤٢﴾ يٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ قَدْ جَآءَنِيْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَاْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِيْۤ اَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ يٰۤاَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطٰنَ ط اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ يٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّيْۤ اَخَافُ اَنْ يَّمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ فَتَكُوْنَ لِلشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ اَرَاغِبٌ اَنْتَ عَنْ اٰلِهَتِيْ يٰۤاِبْرٰهِيْمُ ج لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ لَاَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِيْ مَلِيًّا ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكَ ج سَاَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّيْ ط اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِيْ حَفِيًّا ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ ز عَسٰۤى اَلَّاۤ اَكُوْنَ بِدُعَآءِ رَبِّيْ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤٨﴾ فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لا وَهَبْنَا لَهٗۤ اِسْحٰقَ وَ يَعْقُوْبَ ط وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾ ع

And mention in the Book (the story of) Ibrāhīm. Indeed, he was *ṣiddīq* (a man of truth), a prophet, [41] **when he**

said to his father, "My dear father, why do you worship something that does neither hear nor see, nor help you in any way? [42] **My dear father, to me in fact, there has come a knowledge that has not come to you; so, follow me and I shall lead you to a straight path.** [43] **My dear father, do not worship the Satan. The Satan is surely rebellious to the Raḥmān (All-Merciful).** [44] **My dear father, I fear that a punishment from the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) touches you, and you become a companion of Satan."** [45] **He said, "Are you averse to my gods O Ibrāhīm? Should you not stop, I will definitely stone you. And leave me for good."** [46] **He said, "Peace on you. I shall seek forgiveness for you from my Lord. He has always been gracious to me.** [47] **And I go away from you and what you invoke besides Allah. And I shall invoke my Lord. Hopefully I shall not be a looser by invoking my Lord."** [48] **So, when he went away from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We blessed him with Isḥāq and Ya'qūb and each of them We made a prophet** [49] **And We bestowed on them of our mercy and made them have a good name at its highest.** [50]

Commentary

Meaning of Ṣiddīq

صِدِّيقًا نَّبِيًّا (*Ṣiddīq* (a man of truth), a prophet - 19:41) The word (Ṣiddīq) صِدِّيق is a Qur'ānic term which has been defined differently by different scholars. Some say it is applied to one who has never told a lie in his life. Others describe Ṣiddīq (صِدِّيق) as one who is truthful in his beliefs, words and deeds. In other words his utterances truly reflect his beliefs, and his actions in turn match with his beliefs and words. Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī and Maẓharī have adopted the latter meaning of the word. Then there are different degrees of صِدِّيقِيَت (Truthfulness) i.e. those who fall within this definition are placed at different pedestals. Only a prophet (نبی یا رسول) can be a true صِدِّيق. While every prophet is gifted with this attribute, not everyone who has it is a prophet. A believer who follows in the footsteps of his prophet and attains this exalted position of صِدق (truthfulness) can also be called Ṣiddīq. The Holy Qur'ān itself has given the title of صِدِّيقَه to Sayyidah Maryam علیها السلام, despite the view of the overwhelming majority that she was not a prophet, and that a woman cannot be a prophet.

How to give counsel to elders.

يٰٓاَبَتِ (My dear father - 19:42) In Arabic language this word conveys deep respect and intense love for one's father. Allah Ta'ālā had combined in the person of Sayyidnā Khalilullah عليه السلام the noble qualities and attributes, and his address to his father is a perfect example of moderation and restraint on the one hand, and the balancing of the opposites on the other. He finds his father living a life of unbelief and polytheism, and also calling upon other people to follow him in a life of sin - the very things which he was sent to eradicate. At the same time there is the filial love and respect which he feels towards his father. Now, the thing to note is, how well he combines the two conflicting feelings together. In the first place he uses the word يٰٓاَبَتِ, which is the mark of love and respect for his father, in the beginning of each sentence of the address. Then there is not a single derogatory word in his address which could hurt the feelings of his father, and words such as infidel or sinner have been carefully avoided. Instead, guided by prophetic wisdom he merely invited his father's attention to the helplessness and insensitivity of his idols, so that he might himself realize the fallacy of his beliefs. In the second sentence he made a mention of the prophetic knowledge that was granted to him by Allah Ta'ālā. Then in the third and fourth sentences he warned him against the Divine wrath, which would surely fall on him as a punishment for infidelity and idolatry. Even to these respectful entreaties his father did not pay any heed and, instead of giving any thought to what was said to him and adopting a gentle attitude, he addressed him in a very harsh language. Whereas Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had addressed him with the loving words of يٰٓاَبَتِ, which should have called for a soft and tender response, such as يَا بُنَيَّ (My dear son) he chose to call him by his name and said يَا اِبْرَاهِيم, and not only threatened to stone him to death but also asked him to leave his house. How Sayyidnā Khalilullah عليه السلام responded to this threat is worthy of deep reflection.

سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكَ (Peace on you) Here the word سَلَامٌ (Peace) may carry two meanings. One, that the word سَلَامٌ is used to signify severance of relations in a polite manner so as not to cause hurt to his father. This practice has been described in the Holy Qur'ān as an attribute of good and pious people. An example in point are the words.

وَاِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُوْنَ قَالُوْا سَلَامًا

"When ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully." (25:63)

It means that when the ignorant people say foolish things to them they simply say 'Salām' (peace) instead of getting involved into an argument with them. This is a way of conveying to them that though I do not agree with your views I will not harm you. The second explanation is that the word سلام has been used in the conventional sense. But here the problem is that The Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden the believers to be the first to greet an infidel with the word سلام on meeting him. The following saying of The Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ.

لا تَبْدأ واليهود والنصارىٰ بالسّلام

"Do not be the first to greet Jews and Christians with the word سَلاَم".

On the other hand Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Muslim have also reported through Sayyidnā Usāmah ؓ that The Holy Prophet ﷺ had greeted first a group of people with the word سَلاَم in which infidels, polytheists and Muslims were all present.

This explains the differences which have developed among jurists on the question of propriety or otherwise of this practice. By their words and actions eminent companions (of the Holy Prophet ﷺ), their followers and leaders of religious thought have expressed different views on this issue. Qurṭubī has treated this subject in great detail while explaining this verse in his book Aḥkam ul-Qur'ān. Imām An-Nakha'ī has ruled that when one meets an infidel, a Jew or a Christian on a religious or a worldly need, then there is no harm in taking lead in greeting him with the word سَلاَم, but one should avoid greeting first when there is no need to meet him. Thus both the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ (حديث) have been reconciled.

سَاَسْتَغْفِرُلَكَ رَبِّی (I shall seek forgiveness for you from my Lord - 19:47). Here again the problem is that to ask for forgiveness for the sins of an infidel is prohibited and unlawful by Islamic laws, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had said to his uncle Abū Ṭalib والله لاستغفرنّ لك مالم انه عنه, that is;

"By God I shall keep on praying to Allah for your forgiveness until I am forbidden to do so by Him."

On this the following verse was revealed:

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ يَّسْتَغْفِرُوْا لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ

"It is not for the Prophet and the believers to seek forgiveness for the Mushriks." (9:113)

After the revelation of this verse he ﷺ stopped seeking forgiveness for his uncle.

The answer to this confusion is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had promised his father to seek Divine Mercy for him before such a prayer was forbidden. The prohibition was imposed after this event. Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned this event in Sūrah Mumtaḥinna where this exception is clearly indicated.

إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِأَبِيْهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ

Except that Ibrāhīm said to his father "Certainly I shall ask pardon for you". - 60:4.

This is more clear in Sūrah Taubah in the verse following the verse.

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ يَّسْتَغْفِرُوْا لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ

"It is not for the Prophet and the believers to seek forgiveness for the Mushriks." - 9:113.

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِاَبِيْهِ اِلَّا عَنْ مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَّعَدَهَآ اِيَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهٗٓ اَنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ لِّلّٰهِ تَبَرَّاَ مِنْهُ ط

"And the prayer of Ibrāhīm for the forgiveness of his father was not but due to a promise he had made to him. Later, when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he withdrew himself from him." - 9:114.

This shows that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm's عليه السلام promise to his father to invoke Allah's Mercy for him was made before the latter's firm adherence to infidelity, and his hostility to Allah became clearly evident. When the position was no longer in doubt Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام announced his dissociation from his father.

وَاَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ

And go away from you and what you invoke besides Allah. And I shall invoke my Lord." - 19:48.

On the one hand Sayyidnā Khalīlullāh عليه السلام went to the extreme to show his respect and love for his father, which has been described above, and on the other hand he did not allow the slightest doubt to be cast on

his expression of the universal truth (حق) or on his total belief in it. He accepted willingly his father's orders to leave the house and also made it known that he had totally dissociated himself from his (father's) idols and addressed his prayers only to Allah.

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ

"So, when he went away from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We blessed him with Isḥāq and Ya'qūb." - 19:49.

In the sentence preceding this sentence Hadhrat Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had expressed the hope that on account of his prayers and devotion Allah Ta'ālā would not abandon him. This hope, in fact, was a prayer to Allah to protect him from the pain of loneliness after he left his house and family. The sentence reproduced above describes the manner in which his prayer was granted. When Ibrāhīm عليه السلام left his home and family and their idols, Allah Ta'ālā rewarded him with a son, Isḥāq عليه السلام to compensate him for his loss. It was further revealed to him that this son would have long life and also beget a son by the name of Ya'qūb. Granting of a son is proof that he (Ibrāhīm) was married by then. In brief it means that he was granted a better family, which consisted of prophets and pious people after he had left his father's family.

Verses 51 - 58

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مُوْسٰىٓ ز اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَّ كَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا
﴿٥١﴾ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ الْاَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا
لَهٗ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِنَآ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ ز
اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَانَ يَاْمُرُ اَهْلَهٗ
بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ ص وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي
الْكِتٰبِ اِدْرِيْسَ ز اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَّرَفَعْنٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا
﴿٥٧﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اٰدَمَ ق
وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ز وَّمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْرَآءِيْلَ ز وَمِمَّنْ

هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا ۚ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَٰنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا

﴿٥٨﴾ (السجدة)

And mention in the Book (the story of) Mūsā. Indeed he was a chosen one and was a messenger, a prophet. [51] **And We called him from the right side of the mount Tūr (Sinai), and We drew him close to commune in secret.** [52] **And We, out of Our mercy, granted him his brother Hārūn as a prophet.** [53] **And mention in the Book (the story of) Isma'īl. He was indeed true to his promise and was a messenger, a prophet.** [54] **And he used to bid Ṣalāh and Zakāh to his family and was favorite with his Lord.** [55] **And mention in the Book (the story of) Idrīs. He was indeed a *ṣiddīq* (man of truth), a prophet.** [56] **And We raised him to a high place.** [57] **Those are the people whom Allah has blessed with bounties, the prophets from the progeny of 'Ādam and from those whom We boarded (the Ark) along with Nūḥ and from the progeny of Ibrāhīm and Isrā'īl, and from those whom We guided and selected. When the verses of The Raḥmān (All-Merciful) are recited before them they fall down in Sajdah (prostration), weeping.** [58]

Commentary

كَانَ مُخْلَصًا (Indeed he was a chosen one - 19:51) مُخلَص means a person whom Allah Ta'ālā has chosen for himself i.e. someone who will not devote himself to anyone but Allah, and whose only desire is to win Allah's benevolence. This special position is enjoyed by the prophets only as mentioned in the Qur'ān at another place.

إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ

"We purified them with a quality most pure, the remembrance of the Abode." - 38:46.

Those among the followers of prophets who attain perfection are also granted a place of distinction, which makes them immune to committing sins and evil deeds through Divine dispensation. They remain in Allah's protection all the time.

مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ (The right side of the mount Tūr - 19:52). This famous mountain (Tūr or Sinai) rises in Syria between Madyan and Egypt, and is

still known by the same name. Allah Ta'ālā has given it a distinct and special position in many ways.

الأيْمَن The position of Tūr is given to the right side in relation to Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ who had commenced his journey from Madyan and when he approached Tūr, it was on his right side. نَجِيًّا is for whisper, مُنَاجَات is for confidential talk and نَجِى means a confidant.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِنَآ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ

"And We, out of our mercy, granted him his brother Hārūn." - 19:53.

Literal meaning of هبه is a gift. Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had prayed to Allah to grant prophethood to Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ also in order to provide him support. This prayer was granted and the word وَهَبْنَا has been used to describe this episode i.e. the grant of the gift of Hārūn ﷺ to Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ. That is why Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ is also known as the Gift of Allah (هبة الله). (Maẓharī)

وَاذْكُرْ فِى الْكِتٰبِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ

"And mention in the Book (the story of) Ismā'il." - 19:54.

The reference here is clearly to Sayyidnā Ismā'il ﷺ, the son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام , who has not been mentioned earlier along with his father Ibrāhīm and brother Isḥāq عليهما السلام but mention has been made of him after a brief interlude in which an account of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ is given. It is possible that by making a reference to Sayyidnā Ismā'il ﷺ apart from others, instead of treating him along with them, the intention was to give him prominent status. In this verse the prophets have not been mentioned in the order in which they were granted missions of prophethood, because Idrīs ﷺ who has been mentioned last was, in fact, the earliest of them all.

كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ

"He was indeed true to his promise." - 19:54.

Fulfillment of promise is regarded as an important part of the moral code by all decent men, just as a breach of it is considered worthy of contempt. A saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has described the breaking of promise as a sign of hypocrisy. Thus, none of the prophets and messengers of Allah have been accused of bad faith / a breach of promise.

Here certain attributes have been assigned to some of the prophets, but this does not mean that the other prophets did not possess them. It only suggests that these special attributes distinguish them from all the other prophets, just as Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has been described as مُخلَص. All the other prophets possessed this quality, but it has been specifically applied to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. Hence a special mention of him with the attribute.

Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام occupies a place of honour where keeping a promise is concerned and he stood by his promise whether made to Allah or to humans. He fulfilled his promise to Allah that he would offer himself for sacrifice and will not be found wanting in courage. When the time came he stood by his promise. Once, he promised to meet a man at an appointed place and time. The man did not turn up at the appointed time, but Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام waited for him at the place for three days, and according to another tradition for full one year. (Maẓharī) A similar incident is reported about The Holy Prophet ﷺ by Tirmidhī on the authority of Abdullāh Ibn Ari Al-Khamsa that he waited for three days for someone who had promised to meet him at a particular place. (Qurṭubī)

Importance of keeping one's promise.

Fulfillment of promise is a distinctive trait of the character of the prophets and the pious, and a normal code of conduct with all decent persons. Breaking of a promise, on the other hand, is a habit of the wicked, mean and liars. A saying of the The Holy Prophet ﷺ is العدة دين "A promise is like a debt." i.e. it is as obligatory to honour a promise as it is to repay a debt. There is another saying of The Holy Prophet ﷺ which says وای المؤمن واجب. It means that "promise is an obligation for a believer."

Jurists are all agreed that a promise is a debt and its fulfillment obligatory, but only in the sense that its violation without a religious (شرعی) excuse is a sin though no remedy can be sought for its breach in a court of law. In the language of the Jurists a debt is an obligation which is enforceable, while a promise is not.

A reformer must begin his mission with his own family

كَانَ يَأْمُرُ اَهْلَهٗ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ

"And he used to bid Ṣalāh and Zakāh to his family." - 19:55.

A special attribute of Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام is that he used to direct his family members to offer prayers and pay obligatory charity (زکوٰة). Here the question arises that all Muslims are required to advise their family members to perform good deeds as the Qur'ān addresses the believers

قُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا

"Save yourself and your family members from the Fire (of Hell)." - 66:6.

Then why has a special mention been made of Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام in this matter? The fact is, that although this injunction applies to all Muslims, Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام used to make special efforts in following this directive. Likewise, the Holy Prophet ﷺ also received special directive to warn his family members and close relations against Allah's wrath وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ (and warn the nearest people of your clan - 26:214). As a consequence he assembled them all and conveyed to them Allah's command. The other point to consider here is that prophets are sent by Allah for the guidance of entire people. They convey Allah's message to everyone and bind them to obey His command. Then what is the point in making special mention of the members of family? The thing is that there are certain principles which the prophets observe when calling upon people to follow the path of righteousness, and one of them is to give the call first to one's own family members before calling upon the general public. It is a lot easier to prevail upon one's own family members and to monitor their actions. Once the family members have accepted a certain way of life and have started acting on it routinely then it becomes much easier to spread the same message among others at large. When people see for themselves others following a righteous path it becomes much easier to convert them. The most effective means for bringing about an improvement in the character of the people is by creating a religious environment. Experience shows that virtue and vice both proliferate faster and wider in a receptive environment than through teaching and preaching.

وَاذْكُرْ فِى الْكِتٰبِ اِدْرِيْسَ

"And mention in the Book (the story of) Idris." - 19:56.

Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام lived one thousand years before Sayyidnā Nūḥ

عليه السلام, and was among his ancestors. (Rūḥ ūl-Ma'ānī with reference to Mustadrak al-Ḥakim). He was the first Prophet after Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام and Allah Ta'ālā bestowed upon him thirty books. (Abī zar- Zamkhashari). Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام was the first man who was given the knowledge of astrology and mathematics through a miracle, (Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ). He was also the first man who learnt how to write with a pen, and also the first who invented stitching of cloth, people used to wear animal skins instead of clothes before his time. He also invented measurement tools for the first time. Making of weapons also started in his time and he used them in his wars - the Holy wars (جہاد: Jihād) against the descendents of Qabīl (بنو قابیل) (Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Qurṭubī, Maẓharī, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

وَرَفَعْنٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا

"And We raised him to a high place." - 19:57.

It means that he was granted a special position among prophets and was close to Allah Ta'ālā. There are also other versions about his ascent to the sky, about which Ibn-e-Kathīr has said

هذا من اخبار كعب الاحبار الاسرائيليات وفي بعضه نكارة

"This is taken from the traditions of the Israelites as reported by Ka'ab Al-Aḥbār, some of which are disputed, and unfamiliar."

The Qur'ānic words are not specific on the subject whether he was given a sublime position or was physically lifted to the sky. Therefore, his physical ascent to the sky is not definite. In any case commentary of the Holy Qur'ān is not dependent on this issue. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

From Bayān ul-Qur'ān - The difference between the definition of 'Rasūl' and 'Nabī' and their inter-relationship.

"The words Rasūl and Nabī have been variously explained. Having considered all possibilities I have come to the conclusion that the relationship between the two is on being specific or general on the basis of their application.

Rasūl is one who delivers a new code to those among whom he is sent, even though the code may be new to himself as well, like Torah to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, or the code be new only to his people, as was the case with Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام. The code that he was preaching was in

fact given to his father, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, but it was new for the tribe of Jurhum who did not know about it beforehand, and learnt its details from Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام only, who was sent to them for this purpose. It, therefore, follows that it is not necessary for a Rasūl to be Nabi just as the angels who are Rasūl but not Nabi or the messengers sent to Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام who are referred in Qur'ān as Rasūl, although they were not Nabī. إِذْ جَآءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ (36:13).

On the other hand Nabī is the one who is the bearer of Waḥy (Allah's message) regardless of whether he preaches an old or a new religious code. Many a prophets from Banī Isra'īl fall under this category, as they preached the religious code given to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. It, therefore, follows that the word Rasūl is more general compared to Nabī. But in certain other ways converse is the case. Where the two words are used together, as in the case of this verse where they appear as رَسُوْلاً نَبِيًّا, there is no problem in that they can be taken both in specific or in general term, and there will not be any contradiction. But in such situations where the two words appear separately one against the other, then having regard to the relative position of the two words in the verse the term Nabī will denote someone who is following the religious code brought by someone else."

أُولَٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اٰدَمَ

"Those are the people whom Allah has blessed with bounties, the prophets from the progeny of Ādam." - 19.58.

This relates only to Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام .

وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ

"And from those whom We boarded (the Ark) along with Nūḥ." - 19:58.

This relates to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام only,

وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ

"and from the progeny of Ibrāhīm" - 19:58.

This relates to Ismā'il, Isḥāq and Ya'qūb عليهم السلام .

وَ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ

"and Isrā'īl" - 19:58.

This points out to Sayyidnā Mūsā, Hārūn, Zakariyyā and Yaḥyā and 'Īsā عليهما السلام.

إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَٰنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا

"When the verses of The Raḥmān (All-Merciful) are recited before them they fall down in Sajdah (prostration), weeping." - 19:58.

Some very prominent prophets have been mentioned in the preceding verses as also their exalted status. Thus, there was a real danger that people might raise them to an exaggerated and high position as was the case with Jews who treated Sayyidnā 'Uzair عليه السلام as God, or the Christians who elevated Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام to a level where they called him the son of God. Therefore, after the mention of all those prophets it was made very clear in the very next verse that they were all very God-fearing and used to prostrate (سَجْدَة) themselves before Allah in extreme reverence. It is to avoid any possibility of crossing the limits of reverence for them (Bayān ul-Qur'ān).

Weeping during the recitation of Qur'ān / Divine Book was the Practice of the Prophets

Weeping while reciting Qur'ān is a commendable act and was also an attribute of the prophets. It has been reported that The Holy Prophet ﷺ, his companions, their followers and the God-fearing people followed this practice.

Qurṭubī has reported that religious scholars consider it desirable that when going into Sajdah after reciting a verse of Sajdah (آیتِ سجدہ) one should recite a prayer which is appropriate to the verse of Sajdah (آیتِ سجدہ). For instance in Sūrah Sajdah (sūrah # 32) the following prayer be recited.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِیْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِیْنَ لِوَجْهِکَ الْمُسَبِّحِیْنَ بِحَمْدِکَ وَاَعُوْذُ بِکَ اَنْ اَکُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُسْتَکْبِرِیْنَ عَنْ اَمْرِکَ

(O Allah, make me of those who prostrate to You alone, and who glorify You along with proclaiming Your praise. And I seek refuge with You from being of those who turn their faces, in arrogance, against Your command.)

While in the case of Sajdah at verse # 109 of سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِیْ (Sūrah Banī Isra'īl) one should recite.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِیْ مِنَ الْبَاكِيْنَ اِلَيْکَ الْخَاشِعِيْنَ لَکَ

(O Allah, make me of those who weep before You and who are humble in heart before You.)

And for the verse of Sajdah under reference the following should be recited.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِیْ مِنْ عِبَادِکَ الْمُنْعَمِ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَهْدِيِّيْنَ السَّاجِدِيْنَ لَکَ الْبَاكِيْنَ عِنْدَ تِلَاوَةِ اٰيَاتِکَ

(O Allah make me of those among Your slaves upon whom You bestowed Your bounties, who prostrate before You, who weep while reciting Your verses.) (Qurṭubī)

Verses 59 - 63

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ اَضَاعُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوٰتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٠﴾ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنِ ِۨالَّتِیْ وَعَدَ الرَّحْمٰنُ عِبَادَهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ وَعْدُهٗ مَاْتِيًّا ﴿٦١﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا لَغْوًا اِلَّا سَلٰمًا ؕ وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيْهَا بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِیْ نُوْرِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾

Then came after them the successors who ruined Ṣalāh and pursued desires. So they will soon face (the outcome of their) perversion, [59] **except those who repent and believe and do good deeds, and therefore they will enter the Paradise and will not be wronged at all-** [60] **the Gardens of eternity, promised by the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) to His servants, in the unseen world. His promise is sure to be arrived at.** [61] **They will not hear anything absurd therein but a word of peace, and there they will have their provision at morn and eve.** [62] **That is the Paradise We will give as inheritance to those of Our servants who have been God-fearing.** [63]

Commentary

خَلْف (Khalf) means bad successors, while خَلَف (Khalaf) means good

successors. (Maẓharī) Mujahid رحمه الله تعالى, has reported that when the Day of Judgment would be near and the pious people would all be dead and gone, people will lose interest in prayers and indulge in all sort of vices and evil deeds.

Offering prayers outside fixed time or not with congregation (جماعت) is a default and of no avail, and is a great sin.

Most exegetes / commentators are of the view that offering prayers after its time has lapsed is a default of prayers (اَضَاعُوا الصَّلٰوةَ). Among them are Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Nakhai, Qasim, Mujahid, Ibrāhīm and 'Umar Ibn 'Abdūl 'Azīz. While others consider that any lapse in the form and conditions of prayers is اضاعتِ صلوٰة and includes the lapse of time as well. Still others believe that offering of prayers at home and not with the congregation (جماعت) is اضاعتِ صلوٰة. (Qurṭubī, Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ).

Sayyidnā 'Umar al-Fārūq ؓ, had sent out a circular to all his governors saying:

إن أهم امركم عندى الصلوٰة، فمن ضيعها فهو لما سواها اضيع (مؤطا امام مالک)

"In my view the most important among your tasks is prayer. So, whoever defaults in this, will default in discharging his other obligations all the more."

Once Sayyidnā Ḥudaifah ؓ saw someone offering his prayers without observing the prescribed rules, and was going through the rituals rather hurriedly without pausing. He asked the man how long he had been offering his prayers like that. The man replied for the last forty years. Then Sayyidnā Ḥudaifah ؓ said:

"You have not offered a single of your prayers correctly."

He further remarked:

"If you die offering your prayers like this then remember you will die without following the course given by The Holy Prophet ﷺ.".

Sayyidnā Abū Mas'ūd Anṣarī ؓ has been quoted in Tirmidhī that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had said that the prayer of a person is lost who does not observe اقامت i.e. does not stand upright in his prayers. It means that if one does not pause while bowing down (رکوع) and prostrating (سجده) in his prayers or who does not stand straight up after bowing down (رکوع) or

does not sit up in between two prostrations (سجدون) his prayers would be considered as not performed. Similarly, if one is not careful about ablution (وضو) and his cleanliness (طهارت) his prayers will also be lost.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan-al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has observed that leaving the mosques unattended and being over involved in business and enjoyments of life is included in the meaning of this verse.

Imām Qurṭubī رحمه الله تعالى after reproducing these sayings had said that even knowledgeable people ignore the prescribed rules of prayers and merely go through its motions. He made this observation in the 6th century Hijrah when such people were few. Presently the position is worse, and there are many more people who disregard the rules of prayers. نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَاَعْمَالِنَا .

وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوٰتِ (and pursued desires - 19:59) (شَهَوَات) refers to all such wordly pleasures which make people negligent of their duty to Allah making them lose interest in Prayers. Sayyidnā 'Alī كرم الله وجهه has said that palatial houses and luxurious carriages which attract people's eye, and wearing dresses which distinguish a person from the common man all fall within the category of worldly pleasures. (Qurṭubī)

فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا (So they will soon face[the outcome of their] perversion - 19:59) The word غَیّ in Arabic language is the opposite of رشاد. All virtues and good things are رشاد and all vices and evils are غَیّ. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ has reported that there is a cave in Hell by the name غَیّ, which houses various types of severe punishments, more numerous than all the punishments of Hell.

Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has remarked that even Hell seeks protection from غَیّ, which is the name of a cave in the Hell. Allah Ta'ālā has prepared it for habitual adulterers who persist in adultery, and for the drunkards who do not give up drinking, and for the usurers who do not stop taking interest and for those who disobey their parents, and those who give false witness and for the woman who declares someone else's child as her husband's. (Qurṭubī)

لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا لَغْوًا اِلَّا سَلٰمًا

"They will not hear anything absurd therein but a word of peace." - 19:62.

(لَغو) means idle, absurd, frivolous and abusive talk, which will not reach the ears of good people who have been admitted to Paradise.

اِلاَّسَلاَمًا means that whatever one will hear in Paradise will add to his happiness, peace and tranquility. It includes the customary greetings (سَلاَم), which the dwellers of Paradise will exchange among themselves and the angels of God will offer them all. (Qurṭubī)

وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا

"And there they will have their provisions at morn and eve." - 19:62.

There will be no solar system in the Paradise and hence no rising or setting of the sun, but there will be a perpetual radiance. There will also be some way of telling day from night and morning from evening. Within this distinction between morning and evening the Paradise dwellers will receive their meals. It goes without saying that the wishes of the Paradise dwellers will be fulfilled forthwith (وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُوْنَ - and for themselves, there is what they desire - 16:57). This is a general announcement. Hence, mention of morning and evening is because of people's habit to eat and drink in the morning and in the evening. According to an Arab saying, anyone who gets a full meal morning and evening is comfortable and at peace.

Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ, said after reciting this verse that it shows that the believers have their meals twice a day, one in the morning and the other in the evening.

Some scholars have explained that mention of morning and the evening is a general expression, like day and night or east and west, which does not specify any particular time or place. Therefore, it means that they (Paradise dwellers) will get their provisions according to their choice at any time they like. (Only God knows best) (Qurṭubī)

Verses 64 - 72

وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ اِلاَّ بِاَمْرِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَهٗ مَا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْنَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهٖ ؕ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهٗ سَمِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾ وَيَقُوْلُ الْاِنْسَانُ

ءَإِذَا مَا مِتُّ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٧﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ ثُمَّ
لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيْعَةٍ
أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٦٩﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
أَوْلٰى بِهَا صِلِيًّا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِنْ مِّنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلٰى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا
مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّنَذَرُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ فِيْهَا جِثِيًّا
﴿٧٢﴾

(Jibra'īl said to the Holy Prophet) "And we do not descend but with the command of your Lord. To Him belongs what is in front of us and what is behind us and what is in between. And your Lord is not the one who forgets - [64] **the Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them. So, worship Him and persevere in His worship. Do you know any one worthy of His name?"** [65] **And man says, "Is it that, once I die, I shall be brought forth alive?"** [66] **Does not the man remember that We created him before when he was nothing?** [67] **So, by your Lord, We will definitely gather them together with the devils, then We will definitely make them present around the Jahannam, fallen on their knees.** [68] **Then We will certainly draw out, from every group, those who are more rebellious against the Raḥmān (All-Merciful).** [69] **Then of course, We are most aware of those who are more deserving to enter it (the Jahannam).** [70] **And there is none among you who is not to arrive at it. This, on the part of your Lord, is a matter finally decided, bound to happen.** [71] **Then We will save those who feared Allah, and will leave the wrongdoers in it, fallen on their knees.** [72]

Commentary

وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهٖ ("and persevere in His worship." - 19:65) The word اِصْطِبَار means perseverance in the face of acute distress and hardship. The point here is that any one who wishes to be constant and steadfast in his

prayers must be prepared to undergo pain and suffering.

هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ("Do you know any one worthy of His name?" - 19:65) In the generally accepted sense the word سَمِيٌّ applies to persons bearing the same name. The polytheists and idolaters had included many humans, angels, stones and idols along with Allah Ta'ālā in their worship and designated all of them as إِلَٰه i.e. as objects of worship but it is a strange and extraordinary coincidence that none of their false gods was ever named as Allah. This matter was pre-ordained, and no idol or deity bore the name Allah. Thus, the literal meaning of the word سَمِيٌّ would adequately explain the meaning of this verse which is that there is no object in the world bearing Allah's name.

Many commentators, among them Mujāhid, Ibn Zubair, Qatadah, and Ibn 'Abbas, are of the view that in the present context the word سَمِيٌّ means "a like" or "comparable" and the sense of the verse is that in the entire pantheon of false gods none is equal or comparable to Allah Ta'ālā in so far as divine attributes are concerned.

لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ

"We will definitely gather them together with the devils, then We will definitely make them present." - 19:68.

This verse may be interpreted in two ways. First, that on the Day of Judgement every infidel will be brought before God along with his own devil, and this suggests that this is a reference to the gathering of infidels and their devils. But if it is interpreted in a general sense to include all believers and infidels then the meaning of the devils being gathered with all of them would be that while the infidels will be gathered with their devils, the believers would also be gathered at the same time and place. Thus the devils will be gathered along with the infidels as well as with the believers.

حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا

"Around the *Jahannam* fallen on their knees." - 19:68.

On the Day of Resurrection every one - believers, infidels, the blessed and the wretched - will be assembled around Hell. Every one will be seized with awe and terror, and they will all be on their knees, then the believers and the blessed will be taken across Hell and admitted into

Paradise, so that having viewed the extreme suffering of Hell they may all the better enjoy their own state of felicity, and at the same time rejoice at the punishment which has been inflicted upon the infidels.

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيْعَةٍ

"Then We will certainly draw out from every group." - 19:69.

The word شِيْعَة is applied to a particular person or the followers of a particular faith, and it also means a sect. The meaning of the verse is that the most rebellious from amongst the different sects of the infidels will be picked out. Some commentators say that the sinners will be committed to Hell in the order of the intensity of their sins, i.e. those sinners will be driven in first whose sins are most intense and those with less intense sins, will follow them, and so on.

وَاِنْ مِّنْكُمْ اِلاَّ وَارِدُهَا

"And there is none among you who is not to arrive at it." - 19:71.

This means that everybody - be he a believer or an infidel - will go across Hell. However, this does not mean that they would go to stay in it; they would only go across it. But even if the word means "entry", then the pious believers on entry into Hell will feel no discomfort because its fires will cool down and will do no harm to them. Sayyidnā Abū Sumayya ﷺ has related that The Holy Prophet ﷺ once said that:

> "Everybody whether he is a pious man or a sinner will initially enter Hell, but for the pious believers the fire will cool down just as the fire of Namrūd cooled down when Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was cast into it. Thereafter, the believers will be taken to Paradise."

This view is confirmed by the next sentence ثُمَّ نُنَجِّى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا which means then We will save those who feared Allah - 19:72. A similar view has also been expressed by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, thus even if the word وُرُوْد occurring in the Qur'ān is taken to mean دُخُوْل (entry), then the word دُخُوْل will be interpreted as synonymous with the word عُبُوْر (going across). Thus there is no contradiction in the meaning of the word.

Verses 73 - 76

وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا ۙ اَىُّ

الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَّاَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ
قَرْنٍ هُمْ اَحْسَنُ اَثَاثًا وَّرِئْيًا ﴿٧٤﴾ قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِى الضَّلٰلَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ
لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ مَدًّا ۚ حَتّٰىٓ اِذَا رَاَوْا مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ اِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَاِمَّا
السَّاعَةَ ط فَسَيَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَيَزِيْدُ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ط وَالْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا
وَّ خَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿٧٦﴾

And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Which of the two groups is superior in respect of its place and better in respect of its assembly?" [73] **And how many a generation We have destroyed before them who were better in assets and outlook!** [74] **Say, "Whoever stays straying, let his term be extended by The Raḥmān (All-Merciful) still longer until when they will see what they are being warned of: either the punishment or the Hour (of doom), then they will know who was worse in respect of his place and weaker in respect of his forces.** [75] **And Allah makes those on the right path excel in guidance. And the everlasting virtues are better with your Lord in respect of reward and better in their return.** [76]

Commentary

خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَّاَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا

"Superior in respect of its place and better in respect of its assembly" - 19:73.

The infidels never relaxed their efforts to confuse and perplex the believers. They were very rich and possessed material wealth in great abundance. They had their retinues, their followers, friends and supporters. In contrast, the believers were poor and lacking in worldly assets. However, it is a common experience that material wealth turns people's heads and makes them unduly proud and arrogant, so that even the sensible and wise among them are led to believe that their prosperity and affluence is the reward of their personal merit and effort, and will

last for ever. History is replete with instances where prosperous communities and rich nations crumbled to dust and vanished without leaving a trace. But these instances of Divine wrath hold no lesson for them and fail to turn them from their erroneous ways.

On the other hand there are good people who, following the teachings of Qur'ān, do not regard wealth and worldly honors as the result of their own effort and merit, but as Allah Ta'ālā's bounty to be held as a trust from Him and to be expended according to His command. They are well aware that these gifts from Allah Ta'ālā will not last for ever, and the prospect of their abatement or even their total loss does not cause them any concern. These are the people who are safe from the mischief resulting from wealth and material abundance to which the infidels are exposed. Prophets like Sayyidnā Sulaymān and Dāwūd عليهما السلام, many a followers of The Holy Prophet ﷺ and multitude among the pious believers fall in this category.

Allah Ta'ālā has dispelled the mistaken notions of the infidels by saying that the transient material prosperity cannot be regarded as a token of His good-will nor as a symbol of their own merit, because it often happens that foolish and undeserving people are loaded with wealth while wise and learned persons spend their lives in poverty.

وَالْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَّ خَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا

"And the everlasting virtues are better with your Lord in respect of reward and better in their return". - 19:76

These words have been interpreted differently by different scholars as has been explained at some length in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Kahf (سورہ کہف). The more plausible interpretation, however, is that the words refer to submission to the commands of Allah and to good deeds, the benefits of which are everlasting.

مَرَدًّا means consequences, and the sense of this verse is that good deeds alone are the real wealth whose reward is great and whose result is eternal peace.

Verses 77 - 82

اَفَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِىْ كَفَرَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَقَالَ لَاُوْتَيَنَّ مَالًا وَّ وَلَدًا ﴿٧٧﴾ اَطَّلَعَ

الْغَيْبَ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ كَلَّا ۚ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ اٰلِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٨١﴾ كَلَّا ۚ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ﴿٨٢﴾

Did you, then, see him who rejected Our verses and said, "I shall certainly be given wealth and children?" [77] **Has he peeped in the unseen or taken a covenant with the Raḥmān (All-Merciful)?** [78] **Never. We will write what he says and extend for him the punishment extensively.** [79] **And We will inherit from him what he is talking about and he will come to Us all alone.** [80] **And they have taken gods other than Allah so that they might be a might for them.** [81] **Never. They will soon deny their worshipping and they will be just the opposite for them.** [82]

Commentary

لَأُوتَيَنَّ مالاً وَّوَلَداً ("I shall certainly be given wealth and children". - 19:77) Bukhārī and Muslim relate the story of Sayyidnā Khabab Ibn Al-'Aratt who had lent some money to 'Ās Ibn Wā'il. When pressed to return the loan, 'Āṣ Ibn Wail said that he would not make the payment until he (Sayyidnā Khabab) dissociated himself from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidnā Khabab replied that he would never do that - not until 'Āṣ was dead and rose to life again. At this 'Āṣ Ibn Wail said, "What? will I be brought to life again after I am dead? If so I will repay the loan only after I am brought back to life again because even then I will have my wealth and my children." (Qurṭubī)

This verse is an answer to 'Āṣ Ibn Wail's boastful claim. How does he know that when he is brought back to life he will still have his wealth and children?

اَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ (Has he peeped in the unseen - 19:78) It is obvious that nothing of this kind has happened. Then why has he considered it as a surety?

اَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَالرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا

"Or taken a covenant with The Raḥmān (All-Merciful)" - 19:78.

Or has he entered into a covenant with Allah Ta'ālā and obtained a promise from Him for his wealth and his children?

وَنَرِثُهٗ مَا يَقُوْلُ

"And We will inherit from him what he is talking about" - 19:80.

It is foolish of him to talk about retaining his wealth and children in the Hereafter because he will have to leave behind even these things which he possesses in this world, and his wealth and children will all revert to Allah Ta'ālā.

وَيَاْتِيْنَا فَرْدًا

"And he will come to Us all alone" - 19:80.

And on the Day of Judgment he will appear in God's presence alone without his wealth and his children.

وَيَكُوْنُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا

"And they will be just the opposite for them" - 19:82.

The idols and the false gods whom the infidels worshipped in the hope of winning their help will turn against them on the Day of Judgment. God will grant speech to them and they will say, "O God! finish these sinners because they turned away from you and made us the objects of their worship."

Verses 83 - 87

اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّآ اَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيٰطِيْنَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ اَزًّا ﴿۸۳﴾ فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿۸٤﴾ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ وَفْدًا ﴿۸۵﴾ وَّنَسُوْقُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ﴿۸٦﴾ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿۸۷﴾

Did you not see that We have sent the devils onto the disbelievers inciting them with all their incitements. [83] **So do not hurry about them; We are but counting for them a count down.** [84] **The day We will assemble the God-fearing before the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) as guests** [85] **and will drive the sinners towards the**

Jahannam as herds towards water, [86] **they will have no power of intercession except the one who has taken a covenant with the Raḥmān (All-Merciful).**[87]

Commentary

تَؤُزُّهُمْ اَزًّا

"Inciting them with all their incitements" - 19:83.

In Arabic language the words حَضّ۔ فَزّ۔ اَزّ۔ هَزّ are synonymous, differing only in shade or degree, and mean to urge, incite, instigate. The word اَزّ means to apply strong pressure, to persuade somebody to do something. The sense of this verse is that the Devils instigate the unbelievers to persist in their evil ways by presenting before their eyes the benefits and hiding from them the wickedness of their evil deeds.

اِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا

"We are but counting for them a count down." - 19:84

This verse means: "Do not be impatient about their punishment because it is going to befall upon them in any case - and very soon. We have allowed them a fixed term in this world and that term is about to end. Then will come their retribution." نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ means: "We are counting for them, i.e. they do not have control on anything. Their days are numbered and We keep a count of every moment of their life and everything they do."

Once Ma'mūn Rāshīd read Sūrah Maryam. Upon reading this particular verse, he desired that Ibn Simak, one of the Islamic scholars sitting in that meeting with him, to say something on it. Thereupon Ibn Simak submitted that when our breaths are numbered and their number cannot be enhanced, they will soon come to an end. The same notion is reflected in the following poetic verse:

حیاتک انفاس تعد فکلّما ☆ مضی نفس منک انتقصت به جزءًا

That is, the breaths of your life are counted. With every passing breath, your life gets reduced to that extent.

It is said that during one span of twenty-four hours, one breathes twenty-four thousand times. (Qurṭubī)

The following stanza explores the same context:

وكيف يفرح بالدّنيا ولذّتها ☆ فتى يُعدّ عليه اللفظ وَالنّفس

That is, how can one be so engrossed and relaxed with the worldly pleasures, while his words and breaths are being counted. (Rūḥ)

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ وَفْداً

"The day We will assemble the God-fearing before the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) as guests." - 19:85.

The word وفد applies to those who are received by rulers and princes with respect and honour. According to some sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ he said, "These men will ride on their mounts which they used in their worldly life." Some say that their own virtuous deeds will take the shape of their mounts.

اِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وِرْداً

"Towards the Jahannam as herds towards water" - 19:86.

وِرْد means to go towards water and since only a thirsty man or animal goes towards water, this word has been translated to denote a thirsty person.

مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَالرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا

"Except the one who has taken a covenant with the Raḥmān (All-Merciful)" - 19:87.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضی اللہ عنہ has said that عَهْد means a declaration of firm belief in the Unity of Allah Ta'ālā, while others say that عَهْد means committing the Qur'ān to memory. In brief only those people will have the permission to intercede with Allah who stand firm by their covenant to adhere to the true faith. (Rūḥ)

Verses 88 - 98

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا ﴿۸۸﴾ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا اِدًّا ﴿۸۹﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْاَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿۹۰﴾ اَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدًا ﴿۹۱﴾ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿۹۲﴾ اِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا اٰتِي الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدًا

﴿٩٣﴾ لَقَدْ اَحْصٰىهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ وَكُلُّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
فَرْدًا ﴿٩٥﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ
الرَّحْمٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ وَتُنْذِرَ
بِهٖ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾ وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ
مِّنْ اَحَدٍ اَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ﴿٩٨﴾

And they say, "The Raḥmān (All-Merciful) has taken to Himself a son." [88] **You have come up, indeed, with something so abominable** [89] **that the heavens are about to explode therewith and the earth to burst and the mountains to fall down crumbling,** [90] **for they have ascribed a son to the Raḥmān (All-Merciful),** [91] **while it is not befitting for the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) to have a son.** [92] **There is none in the heavens and the earth, but bound to come to the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) as a salve.** [93] **He has fully encompassed them and precisely calculated their numbers,** [94] **and each one of them is bound to come to Him on the Day of Judgment, all alone.** [95] **Surely, those who believe and do the righteous deeds, for them the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) will create love.** [96] **So We have made it easy through your tongue so that you give with it the good news to the God-fearing and warn with it an obstinate people.** [97] **And how many a generation We have destroyed before them. Do you sense (the presence of) any one of them or hear from them even a whisper?** [98]

Commentary

وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا

"And the mountains to fall down crumbling" - 19:90.

These verses suggest that the earth, the mountains and everything that grows thereon possess a certain degree of knowledge and intelligence though in their case these perceptions are not of the same extent as that bestowed on human beings. This explains the fact that everything in the world glorifies Allah Ta'ālā as will be evident from the verse.

وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ

"And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity

and praise." - 17:44.

These verses refer to this very perception of these things that to associate anything or being with Allah Ta'ālā, specially to assert that He has children is a sin which makes the earth and the mountains quake with fear. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that except humans every created thing is terrified of any suggestion of association with Allah (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا

"And precisely calculated their numbers" - 19:94.

It means that Allah Ta'ālā has full knowledge of their doings.

سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وُدًّا

"For them the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) will create love." - 19:96.

It means that for those who are steadfast in their faith in Him, Allah creates an environment of friendship and love for each other, which consequently promotes mutual amity and goodwill among the true Muslims. Furthermore, by their conduct and behavior they command the admiration and respect of all those with whom they come into contact. Bukhārī, Tirmidhī and others have related on the authority of Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said that when Allah Ta'ālā is pleased with someone He says to Jibra'īl, "I am pleased with so and so and I desire that you too should show favour to him." Jibra'īl makes an announcement to this effect in all the skies so that their residents begin to harbor a liking for that person. Then this love descends upon the earth and the people of the earth also begin to love him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then quoted this verse. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وُدًّا

"Surely those who believe and do the righteous deeds, for them the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) will create love." - 19:96.

Ḥaram bin Ḥayyan has said that when a person devotes himself wholly towards Allah He fills the hearts of all believers with love for him. (Qurṭubī)

When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm Khalilullah ﷺ, planned to go back to Syria, after leaving behind his wife Hajira and his baby son Sayyidnā

Ismā'il ﷺ in the desert enclosed by the barren hills of Makkah in accordance with the command of Allah, he also prayed for both of them with the following words

فَاجْعَلْ اَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِىٓ اِلَيْهِمْ

"So make hearts of a number of people yearn toward them." - 14:37.

The prayer was granted so that even after the lapse of many millennia people all over the world entertain great love for Makkah and its inhabitants. They visit the place in large numbers, and not only incur heavy expenditure but also endure great hardships while making the journey.

اَوْتَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزاً

"Or hear from them even a whisper" - 19:98.

The word رِكز means a faint, unintelligible sound such as a death-rattle. The meaning of the verse is that there have been many kings who ruled vast empires, exercised unlimited authority and lived in great splendor, but when the wrath of Allah caught upon them for their sinful acts, they were annihilated in such a manner that not even a whisper or a feeble motion is now being heard of them.

Alḥamdulillāh

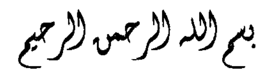
The Commentary on

Sūrah Maryam

Ends here.

Sūrah Ṭā-Hā

Sūrah Ṭā-Ḥā was revealed in Makkah and it has 135 Verses and 8 sections



With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

The other name of this Sūrah, according to As-Sakhawi is Sūrah Kalīm (كليم) because it contains the detailed story of Kalīmullah Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ.

It is reported in the Musnad by Dārimi on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that two thousand years before Allah Ta'ālā created the sky and the earth, He recited (i.e. to the angels) Sūrahs Ṭā-Ḥā and Yāsīn, the angels said, "Fortunate and blessed are the people to whom these Sūrahs will be revealed, and blessed are the chests which will preserve (memorize) them, and blessed are the tongues which will recite them." And it was this very Sūrah which brought about the conversion of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ who had actually set out fully determined to kill the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This story has been related in all the books of *Sīrah* (Biographies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ).

The story as narrated by Ibn Isḥāq runs as follows: One day Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ set out, with sword in hand, fully determined to kill the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the way Nu'aim Ibn 'Abdullāh accosted him and asked him where was he headed to. Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ replied that he was going to finish off the man who had sown discord among the Quraish, vilified their faith, seduced them from belief and disparaged their idols. Nu'aim then said "O 'Umar! You are deceiving yourself. If you kill Muḥammad ﷺ, do you really think that his clan Banū 'Abd Munāf will spare your life? If you have any sense, better see to your own sister and her husband because they both have become Muslims and have accepted the religion of Muhammad ﷺ." Sayyidnā

'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ was shaken by what he heard and retraced his steps towards the house of his sister and her husband. At that moment Sayyidnā Khabbāb bin 'Arath, one of the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ , was teaching both of them Sūrah Ṭā-Ḥā which was written on a sheet of paper.

When they realized that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ was coming, Sayyidnā Khabbāb Ibn 'Arath ﷺ hid himself in another room or in some corner of the house and Sayyidnā 'Umar's sister hid the sheet of paper under her thigh. But Sayyidna 'Umar had heard Sayyidnā Khabbab Ibn Art ﷺ reciting something, and he asked his sister what was it. She tried to evade the question but he would not be put off. Finally he came out in the open and told them point blank that he had just learned about them becoming Muslim and followers of Muḥammad ﷺ. Having said this, he started beating his brother-in-law Sa'īd Ibn Zaid and when his sister Fāṭimah رضى الله عنها came to the rescue of her husband he beat her too and left her bleeding.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضى الله عنها and her husband had enough of it and they called out defiantly, "All right, you listen now! It is true that we have become Muslims and have adopted the Faith of Allah Ta'ālā and His Prophet ﷺ. Now you do whatever you want". Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ then saw that his sister was bleeding and he felt remorse for being too rough with her. He asked her to show him the sheet of paper from which she was reading so that he could learn something about the teachings of Muḥammad ﷺ. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ was a literate person. That is why he wanted to read the sheet of paper himself. His sister was afraid that he might either destroy or desecrate it, but he assured her on oath that he would do neither and promised to return it to her after he had read it. When she saw the way things were moving and noticed a change in his attitude, she even began to entertain the hope that he too might become a Muslim. But she told him that he was unclean and only those who were clean could touch the sheet. So Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ bathed and his sister gave him the sheet on which Sūrah Ṭā-Ḥā was written. He read the first few lines and said, "It is written in beautiful language and appears to be worthy of respect." Khabbāb Ibn 'Arath who had remained hidden all this time, now came out and said, "O 'Umar Ibn Khattab! Allah Ta'ālā is very Merciful and it is my conviction that He had chosen you in response to the

ardent wishes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ whom I heard only yesterday making the following supplication to Allah Ta'ālā اللّهمّ ايّد الاسلام بابى الحكَم بن هشام او بعمر بن الخطّاب ("O Allah! Strengthen Islam through Abul Ḥikam Ibn Hishām (meaning Abu Jahl) or 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb"). The intention was that the conversion of either one of these two men would lend great strength to the Muslims who were as yet very weak. Ibn Khabbāb said, "O 'Umar! This is your chance. Do not miss it". At this, Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb requested Khabbāb ﷺ to take him to the Holy Prophet ﷺ (Qurṭubī). What followed next and how he came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and embraced Islam is too well known to need a repetition at this place.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

طٰهٰ ﴿١﴾ مَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لِتَشْقٰٓى ﴿٢﴾ اِلَّا تَذْكِرَةً لِّمَنْ يَّخْشٰى ﴿٣﴾ تَنْزِيْلًا مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ وَالسَّمٰوٰتِ الْعُلٰى ﴿٤﴾ اَلرَّحْمٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوٰى ﴿٥﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرٰى ﴿٦﴾ وَاِنْ تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَاِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَاَخْفٰى ﴿٧﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ لَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى ﴿٨﴾

Ṭā-Ḥā [1] **We did not reveal the Qur'ān to you to (make you) face hardship** [2] **rather to remind him who has the fear** [3] **a revelation from the One Who created the earth, and the heavens so high.** [4] **The Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) has positioned Himself on the Throne.** [5] **To Him belongs whatever there is in the heavens, whatever there is in the earth, whatever there is between them and whatever there is beneath the soil.** [6]

And if you pronounce the word aloud, then (it makes no difference, for) He certainly knows the secret and what

is even more hidden. [7] **(Such is) Allah. There is no god but He. For Him are the Beautiful Names.** [8]

Commentary

طٰهٰ (Ṭā-Ḥā) Many Commentators have assigned different meanings to this word. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ thinks it means يا رجل (O man!) while according to Ibn 'Umar ﷺ it means يا حبيبى (O my Dear!). It is also suggested that طٰهٰ and يٰسٓ are the names of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However the most obvious explanation is the one given by Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ and the majority of scholars, namely that like many other isolated letters حروف مقطعه appearing at the beginning of several chapters of the Qur'ān (such as الٓمٓ), this word is also among the مُتشابهات or mysteries whose meaning is known only to Allah Ta'ālā.

مَآ اَنۡزَلۡنَا عَلَيۡکَ الۡقُرۡاٰنَ لِتَشۡقٰٓى (We did not reveal the Qur'ān to you to [make you] face hardship - 20:2) The word لِتَشۡقٰٓى is derived from شقاء which means pain and distress. In the early days of Islam when the Qur'ān was first revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions used to spend whole nights in prayers and in reciting the Qur'ān, as a result of which his feet used to get swollen due to standing for long hours in the prayers. Whereas during day time he would worry himself on how to bring light to the infidels in order that they should accept the teachings of the Qur'ān. This verse seeks to lessen the burden of long hours of prayers by informing the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the Qur'ān was not revealed to inflict toil and hardship on him and that it was not expected of him to stay awake the whole night reciting the Qur'ān. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet ﷺ adopted a routine by which he rested in the early hours of the night and would get up later to offer the *ṣalāh* of *tahajjud.*

This verse also suggests that the duty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is merely to convey the Message of Allah Ta'ālā to the unbelievers, and thereafter he need not concern himself as to who accepted the Message and who did not.

اِلَّا تَذۡكِرَةً لِّمَنۡ يَّخۡشٰى (Rather to remind him who has the fear - 20:3). Ibn Kathīr has narrated that in the early days following the revelation of the Qur'ān while the believers spent whole nights in prayers, the infidels mocked and taunted them that the revelation of the Qur'ān brought nothing to them but hardship, allowing them no rest and peace. In this

verse, Allah Ta'ālā says that these wretched and miserable people cannot sense that the Qur'ān and the knowledge communicated through it can bring only blessings and felicity. This fact is not appreciated by them because they are ignorant and misguided. In a Ḥadīth which has been related by Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah ﷺ the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When Allah intends to reward a person, He gives him the correct perception of religion". (Ṣaḥīhain)

Here Imām Ibn Kathīr has recorded another authentic Ḥadīth which has been related by Ṭabarāni from Tha'labah Ibn Al-Ḥakam and which will be good news for the learned people :

قال رسول اللّٰه صلی اللّٰه علیه وسلم: یقول اللّٰه تعالٰی للعلماء یوم القیامة اذا قعد علی کرسیّه لقضاء عباده: انّی لم اجعل علمی وحکمتی فیکم الاّ وانا ارید ان اغفر لکم علی ما کان منکم ولا ابالی (ابن کثیر ص ۱٤۱ ج ۳)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "On the Day of Judgment when Allah will ascend His Kursiyy (Chair) to pronounce judgment on the actions of His servants He will tell the learned people that He had placed His knowledge and wisdom in their hearts for the sole reason that He wished to forgive them in spite of their failings, and that these matters were of no concern to Him."

It is evident that in this Ḥadīth the reference to learned people applies to those only who possess the fear of Allah Ta'ālā which is a sure sign of Qur'ānic knowledge.

عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوٰى (Positioned Himself on the Throne - 20:5): About these words the truth is what the majority of the early scholars have held that the exact nature of 'Istiwa" (positioning) is not known to anybody. It is included in 'Mutashabihat' (the verses meaning of which is unknown). A Muslim has to believe that Istiwā' 'Ala-Al-'Arsh' (positioning on the Throne) is true, the nature of which must be in accordance with the high attributes of Allah, but nobody can comprehend it in this world.

وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرٰى (And whatever is beneath the soil - 20:6). (ثریٰ) (soil) means wet earth which comes out after digging upto a certain depth. Human knowledge does not go beyond ثریٰ and what is beneath it is known only to Allah. Some years back scientists and researchers, using the latest and the most sophisticated instruments, spent considerable time and effort to pierce across the centre of the earth. According to newspaper reports they

were able to penetrate upto a depth of six miles only after which they came across a rock casing and all their efforts to bore further down failed. Scientists were able to collect data only upto six miles, while the diameter of the earth covers thousands of miles. One has to admit, therefore, that the knowledge of what is below the soil is a special attribute of Allah.

يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَ اَخْفٰى (Knows the secret and what is even more hidden - 20:7). سرّ (Sirr: Secret) means something which a man hides in his heart and which is not known to anyone else and اخفى (what is more hidden) means a thought which has not even formed in his mind and will take shape later on. Allah is fully aware of what ideas a man conceals in his heart at a particular moment and what thoughts he will entertain in the future, while the person concerned himself does not know what thoughts will come to his mind in the days to come.

Verses 9 - 16

وَهَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ مُوْسٰى ﴿٩﴾ اِذْ رَاٰ نَارًا فَقَالَ لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْٓا اِنِّيْٓ
اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّيْٓ اٰتِيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ اَوْ اَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى ﴿١٠﴾
فَلَمَّآ اَتٰىهَا نُوْدِيَ يٰمُوْسٰيٓ ﴿١١﴾ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۚ اِنَّكَ
بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٢﴾ وَاَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوْحٰى
﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّنِيْٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِيْ ۙ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِذِكْرِيْ
﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّ السَّاعَةَ اٰتِيَةٌ اَكَادُ اُخْفِيْهَا لِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍۭ بِمَا تَسْعٰى
﴿١٥﴾ فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ فَتَرْدٰى ﴿١٦﴾

And has there come to you the story of Mūsā? [9] **When he saw a fire and said to his family, "Wait. I have noticed a fire. Perhaps I bring you an ember from it, or find some guidance by the fire."** [10]

So when he came to it, he was called, "O Mūsā, [11] **it is Me, your Lord, so remove your shoes; you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā.** [12] **And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed:** [13] **Surely, I AM ALLAH. There is no god but I, so worship Me and establish**

Ṣalāh for My remembrance. [14] **Surely, the Hour has to come. I would keep it secret so that everyone is given a return for the effort one makes.** [15] **So the one who does not believe in it and follows his desires must not make you neglectful of it, otherwise you will perish.** [16]

Commentary

هَلْ أَتٰكَ حَدِيْثُ مُوْسٰى (And has there come to you the story of Mūsā? - 20:9) In the earlier verses, reference was made to the greatness of the Qur'ān and also to the reverence due to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thereafter, the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has been related so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should become fully aware of the trials and tribulations which afflict the prophets in the discharge of their missions, and which were rendered with courage and fortitude by the earlier prophets. This was to prepare the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the great mission which was entrusted to him. There is another verse which conveys the same sense:

وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ

"And We narrate to you everything from the events of the messengers with which We strengthen your heart." (11:120)

It means that these stories are narrated to prepare you (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and make you strong to undertake the responsibilities of the mission.

The story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام which is related here begins like this. At Madyan he stayed with Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام with the understanding that he would serve the latter for a period of eight or ten years. According to Tafsīr Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, after the expiry of this period he sought the permission of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام to proceed to Egypt to see his mother and sister. He had fled earlier from Egypt fearing capture or death by the soldiers of the Pharaoh but this danger had now passed through the lapse of so many years. Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام willingly gave the permission and sent him away, with his wife (who was the latter's daughter). He also gave him some money and a few articles which they might use during their journey. Since he was apprehensive of the hostility of some of the rulers in Syria, he adopted a less frequented route. It was winter season and his pregnant wife was very close to confinement. The route which he had taken was unfamiliar to him and he lost his bearings. He came out to the west, i.e. the right side of the mount of Ṭūr.

It was a dark and cold night and to add to the misery, his wife began to experience birth pangs. He tried to strike fire with flint but did not succeed. In this state of utter confusion he saw light on the Ṭūr mountain which, infact, was the Nūr (the light symbolizing the truth). So he said to his family, "I have noticed fire. I am going there to bring for you a live coal and I may also find someone who could tell me the way to Egypt." The presence of his wife on the journey is well established. According to some traditions there was a servant with him who is also addressed. Others say that there were some other companions also who were separated when they lost their way. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

فَلَمَّآ اَتٰهَا (So when he came to it - 20:11): means that he approached the fire which he had seen from a distance. Musnad by Ahmad, on the authority of Wahb Ibn Munabbih رحمه الله تعالى reports that when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام drew near the fire he saw a very strange scene. A fire was blazing on a green tree without scorching even a leaf or a branch. On the other hand the flame added manifold to the beauty and the freshness of the tree. He stood there quite a while watching this strange sight waiting for a chance to pick up a piece of burning wood. At last he collected some dry grass and tried to light it but as soon as he pushed the grass towards the fire, it retracted. It is also related that the fire advanced towards him and he drew back in consternation. Consequently he was unable to collect any fire. And as he stood, not knowing what to do, a mysterious voice called him. This happened in a plain called Ṭuwā which was to his right side and at the foot of this mountain.

نُوْدِیَ يٰمُوْسٰی اِنِّیْٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ (He was called, "O Mūsā, it is Me, your Lord, remove your shoes - 20:11,12). It is related in Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī and other books that the voice which Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام heard appeared to come from all directions and not from any particular direction. At the same time the manner in which the voice reached his perception was most extraordinary, because it was heard not only through his ears but by the entire body. This, indeed, was a miracle! What the voice said was that the light that he saw was not fire but a particular kind of divine manifestation. And the voice said, "Surely I am your Lord". The question arises: how did Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام know that it was the voice of Allah Ta'ālā? The answer is that Allah Ta'ālā had created in his heart the conviction that the voice which he heard was

really the voice of Allah Ta'ālā. Then there was the circumstance that the fire, instead of burning the tree added to its beauty and luster. Also the manner in which the voice was perceived by all the parts of his body and not only by his ears, were all factors which left no doubt in his mind that the voice he heard was really the voice of Allah Ta'ālā.

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام learned the words of Allah directly

It is mentioned in a report of Wahb mentioned in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī on the authority of Musnad by Aḥmad that when the mysterious voice called him "O Mūsā!", he replied, "I hear the voice O Allah! But I do not know from where it comes. Where are you, O Allah?" And Allah Ta'ālā said, "I am above you in front of you, to your right and your left. Indeed I am all around you." Then Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام said, "O Allah, do I hear these words from you directly or through an angel sent by You?" And Allah Ta'ālā said, "I myself am speaking to you." According to Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī this proves that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام heard this كلام لفظى (spoken words) directly from Allah Ta'ālā. There is a sect among the Sunnis who believe that كلام لفظى (spoken words) can also be heard.

To take off shoes at a sacred place is an act of respect

فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ :(Remove your shoes - 20:12). The command to take off shoes was given because it was a sacred place and it was necessary to take off shoes to show it proper respect. Another reason for this command may be that since shoes are made from the hides of dead animals, they should be removed when entering upon sacred places. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan al-Baṣri and Ibn Juraij رحمهم الله تعالى have supported the first explanation and reasoned that the real purpose in commanding Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to remove his shoes was that the soles of his feet should come into contact with the soil of this hallowed place and be blessed thereby. Others have said that by this command Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was required to show humility and in earlier times devout and pious believers used to take off their shoes when circumambulating around the Holy Ka'bah.

There is a Ḥadīth that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ once saw Bashīr Ibn Khaṣaṣia walking through the graves with his shoes on, said:

اذا كُنتَ فى مثل هٰذا المكان فاخلع نعليك

"When you pass by a place which needs to be respected, take off your shoes."

All the jurists are unanimous that if the shoes are clean they may be worn when offering prayers and it is established by authentic reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions often wore clean shoes when saying prayers. But their common practice appears to be of removing the shoes when saying prayers, because it is closer to humility.

إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى (You are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā - 20:12): Allah, in his Divine Wisdom, has granted special status to some selected places such as Baitullah (the Holy Ka'bah), the Aqṣā Mosque, Masjid Nabawi etc. Wādī Ṭuwā (the valley of Ṭuwā) is also one such sacred place and is situated at the foot of the mount of Ṭūr.

How to conduct oneself when the Qur'ān is being recited

فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحٰى (So listen to what is revealed - 20:13). Sayyidnā Wahb Ibn Munabbih has said that the correct behavior while listening to the recitation of the Qur'ān is, that one sits still, refrains from any unnecessary movement in a way that no organ of his body is involved in any other work, keeps eyes down - concentrates the mind towards understanding its meaning. The person who listens to the Holy Qur'ān in this respectful manner is rewarded by Allah Ta'ālā with a better understanding of His word.

إِنَّنِيْٓ أَنَا اللّٰهُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِيْ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِذِكْرِيْ (Surely I AM ALLAH. There is no god but I, so worship Me and establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance - 20:14): with these words Allah Ta'ālā bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام a knowledge of all the basic principles of the true Faith, namely the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā, the prophethood and the Hereafter. فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحٰى (So listen to what is revealed) refers to prophethood. فَاعْبُدْنِيْ means "worship Me alone and no one else". This points to the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā. إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ اٰتِيَةٌ (Surely, the Hour has to come) points to the inevitability of the Hereafter. Although the word فَاعْبُدْنِيْ (worship Me) encompasses the injunction for prayers also yet it has been mentioned separately to stress its special merit relative to the other forms of worship. It is the pillar of the Faith and its neglect is the mark of the infidels.

أَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِذِكْرِيْ (Establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance - 20:14): means that the essence of prayer is the remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā and that the Ṣalāh, from beginning to end is nothing but remembering Allah - with the tongue, the heart and the other organs of the body. Therefore,

one should not neglect to remember Allah Ta'ālā while praying. This sentence also means that if a person omits to say his prayers at the appointed time due to over-sleeping or forgetfulness while engrossed in some other task, he should say his prayers as soon as he wakes up from sleep or becomes aware of his lapse. This is according to Ḥadīth.

أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا (I would keep it secret - 20:15): Allah Ta'ālā says that He wishes to keep the circumstances relating to the Day of Judgement hidden from all created things including prophets and angels. The word اكاد (I would) gives a subtle hint that it is only to induce people to good deeds that the coming of the Day of Judgment has been disclosed, otherwise even this fact would have been concealed.

لِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعٰى : (So that everyone is given a return for the effort one makes - 20:15). If this phrase is taken to be linked with the word اٰتِيَة (has to come) then it would mean that this world is not a place of requital. Here a person does not receive recompense according to his merits and even if he receives some reward in this world it is just a token which does not constitute the full recompense of his deeds. It is, therefore, essential that there should be a time when everybody would receive his due reward.

Another possibility about the construction of this phrase is that it is taken to be linked with the words أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا (I would keep it secret - 20:15). In this case, it would mean that the philosophy in not revealing the time of death and the Day of Judgment is that people should continue in their endeavours and should not cease to strive in the belief that their own death or the Day of Judgment are still far away in the future. (Rūḥ)

فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا (must not make you neglectful of it - 20:16) Here Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is cautioned by Allah Ta'ālā lest he should allow himself to be led away by the infidels and become negligent about the Day of Judgment because that would be the cause of his ruination. It is clear that a Prophet and a Messenger who is impeccable cannot commit such a lapse but the fact that such a warning has been addressed to him is meant to warn his followers as well as mankind at large to be cautious in the matter.

Verses 17 - 24

وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يٰمُوسٰى ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ ۚ أَتَوَكَّؤُا عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلٰى غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَآرِبُ أُخْرٰى ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يٰمُوسٰى ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَلْقٰهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعٰى ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ ۖ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولٰى ﴿٢١﴾ وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلٰى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوٓءٍ آيَةً أُخْرٰى ﴿٢٢﴾ لِنُرِيَكَ مِنْ آيٰتِنَا الْكُبْرٰى ﴿٢٣﴾ اِذْهَبْ إِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغٰى ﴿٢٤﴾

And what is that in your right hand, O Mūsā?" [17] **He said, "It is my staff. I lean on it, and with it I beat down leaves for my sheep, and for me it has many other uses."** [18] **He said, "Throw it down O Mūsā".** [19] **So, he threw it down, and suddenly it was a snake, running.** [20] **He said, "Pick it up and be not scared. We shall restore it to its former state.** [21] **And put your hand under your arm and it will come out white, without any disease as another sign,** [22] **so that We may show you some of Our great signs.** [23] **Go to the Pharaoh. He has really transgressed."** [24]

Commentary

وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يٰمُوسٰى The question: "What is in your right hand, O Mūsā"? - 20:17 marks the beginning of the special favour which Allah Ta'ālā showed towards Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in order to dispel the fear created by the unusual sights that he had seen and the Divine Word that he had heard. The style in which Allah Ta'ālā addressed him was friendly, inquiring from him what he held in his hand. Besides there was a subtle purpose in the question, namely to make him aware that what he held in his hand was a staff made of wood and nothing more. And when he had satisfied himself again that it was indeed a wooden staff, then the miracle of turning it into a serpent was revealed, thus precluding any doubt in his mind that in the darkness of the night he might have picked up a serpent instead of his staff.

قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ (He said, "It is my staff" - 20:18). The simple question which

was put to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام i.e. "What is in your hand?" called for an equally brief answer, such as, "It is a staff". But he volunteered additional information which was outside the scope of the question put to him. First, he said that the staff belonged to him; second, that it served him many purposes, namely that he often reclined on it, and also beat down leaves from trees for his goats; third, that he put it to many other uses. This long and detailed reply is a perfect combination of extreme love and adoration on the one hand and profound reverence on the other. It is a natural human instinct that when a person finds the object of his adoration to be kind and attentive, he wishes to prolong the conversation in order to get the best advantage. At the same time the dictates of extreme respect require that the conversation should remain within proper limits and not become too lengthy. For this reason he ended his reply with a brief statement وَلِیَ فِیۡهَا مَاٰرِبُ اُخۡرٰی i.e. "And for me it has many other uses", but he did not give any detail of those "other uses". (Rūḥ and Maẓharī)

From this verse Qurṭubī has deduced in his Tafsīr that when needed, it is permissible, while answering a question, to include matters which are not specifically covered in the question.

Rule

This verse also shows that carrying a staff is a practice followed by the prophets. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also used to carry a staff in his hand and this practice has numerous religious as well as mundane advantages.

فَاِذَا هِیَ حَیَّةٌ تَسۡعٰی (And suddenly it was a snake running - 20:20): When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, in obedience to the command of Allah Taʿālā, cast down his staff it turned into a serpent. The Qur'ān has described this serpent at one place as کَاَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ (28:31). The word جَآنٌّ means a small and slim snake. At another place it has been referred to as فَاِذَا هِیَ ثُعۡبَانٌ (26:32). The word ثُعۡبَانٌ means a long and thick snake. The word حَیَّه occurring in this verse is a generic name used for snakes of all sizes and thickness. These different words can be reconciled by the fact that this serpent was slim and small in the beginning and grew later on in size and thickness. Or that this serpent was originally long and thick and has been called جَآنٌّ by reason of its fast speed because as a general rule big and thick snakes are slow moving. The word کَاَنَّهَا used in this verse, which means "as if" also points to the fact that it has been compared to جَآنٌّ on account of its swift movements. (Maẓharī)

وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ اِلٰى جَنَاحِكَ (And put your hand under your arm - 20:22). The word جَنَاح means fore-limb of an animal or wing of a bird. Here Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was commanded to press his hand under his armpit so that when he brings it out it will shine as brilliantly as the sun, and this will be the second miracle granted to him. This is the meaning given to the words by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه (Maẓharī).

اِذْهَبْ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ (Go to the Pharaoh - 20:24). Having suitably armed him with two great miracles, Allah Ta'ālā commanded Sayyidna Mūsā عليه السلام to proceed to Egypt and invite the Pharaoh to accept the true faith because he had exceeded all bounds in his tyranny and misdeeds.

Verses 25 - 36

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِىْ صَدْرِىْ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسِّرْلِىْٓ اَمْرِىْ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِىْ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَفْقَهُوْا قَوْلِىْ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِّىْ وَزِيْرًا مِّنْ اَهْلِىْ ﴿٢٩﴾ هٰرُوْنَ اَخِى ﴿٣٠﴾ اشْدُدْبِهٖٓ اَزْرِىْ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاَشْرِكْهُ فِىْٓ اَمْرِىْ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَىْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَّ نَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ قَدْ اُوْتِيْتَ سُؤْلَكَ يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿٣٦﴾

He said, "My Lord, put my heart at peace for me [25] **and make my task easy for me** [26] **and remove the knot from my tongue,** [27] **that they may understand my speech.** [28] **And make for me an assistant from my own family:** [29] **Hārūn, my brother.** [30] **Enhance with him my strength,** [31] **and make him share my task,** [32] **so that we proclaim Your purity a lot** [33] **and remember You a lot.** [34] **You are certainly watchful over us."** [35]

He said, "You have been granted your request O Mūsā. [36]

Commentary

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام received the high honour of conversing with Allah Ta'ālā and was granted the mission of prophethood, then, instead of relying on his own self and on his own ability, he turned to Allah Ta'ālā and sought His help in the discharge of his duties without

which it would be impossible for him to endure and persevere in the face of the trials and tribulations inherent in the performance of his mission. He, therefore, prayed to Allah Ta'ālā to grant him five favours.

The first prayer was اِشْرَحْ لِيْ صَدْرِيْ (Put my heart at peace for me - 20:25). Meaning to expand the ability of his heart to enable him to receive all the knowledge and wisdom of prophethood, and at the same time to bear with equanimity the slander of those people who will oppose him in his mission.

His second prayer was وَيَسِّرْلِيْٓ اَمْرِيْ (make my task easy for me - 20:26). Having been granted prophethood he realized that it is not the human ability and skill or other apparent causes which make affairs easy or difficult. In reality, things become easy or difficult as Allah Ta'ālā wills. In the *ḥadīth* the believers have been advised to seek Allah Ta'ālā's help in their affairs with the following words:

اَللّٰهُمَّ الْطُفْ بِنَافِيْ تَيْسِيْرِ كُلِّ عَسِيْرٍ فَإِنَّ تَيْسِيْرَ كُلِّ عَسِيْرٍ عَلَيْكَ يَسِيْرٌ

O Allah! Be kind to us and make our difficult tasks easy because it is easy for you to make every difficult thing easy.

The third prayer وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِيْ يَفْقَهُوْا قَوْلِيْ (And remove the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech - 20:27, 28). The story behind this "knot" is that as an infant Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام lived with his own mother who used to suckle him and was paid for her services by the Pharaoh. When he was weaned, the Pharaoh and his wife 'Āsiya adopted him, and took him away from his mother. One day Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام caught hold of the Pharaoh's beard and slapped him on the face. Another version has it that he was playing with a stick and with it he struck the Pharaoh on his head. The Pharaoh was enraged and made up his mind to put him to death. His wife 'Āsiya tried to pacify him and said, "O King! Why do you take this matter so seriously? After all he is merely a child who does not understand things. You can test him if you like and you will find that he cannot distinguish between good things and bad things".

Thereupon, the Pharaoh ordered two trays to be brought. One was filled with live coal and the other with jewellery. It was expected that the child would be attracted by the brightness of the burning coal and reach for it because children are not normally drawn towards jewellery which is not as bright. This would have convinced the Pharaoh that what Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام did was nothing more than the act of an innocent

child. But Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was no ordinary child. Allah Ta'ālā had chosen him to be a prophet whose instincts were unusual from the very moment of his birth. He put forth his hand to reach out for the jewellery instead of the coal, but Jibra'il عليه السلام turned his hand away and placed it in the tray containing coal. He picked up a piece of burning coal and put it in his mouth and so burned his tongue. The Pharaoh was thus fully satisfied that the action of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was not due to mischief but the result of a child's inability to distinguish between good and bad for himself. This incident caused an impediment in his speech which has been called عقده (knot) in the Qur'ān, and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام prayed to Allah Ta'ālā to make loose this knot. (Maẓharī and Qurṭubī)

The first two prayers are of a general nature and sought Allah Ta'ālā's help in all matters. The third prayer is for the removal of a disability because eloquence and fluency of expression are essential elements in the successful conduct of prophetic mission. In a subsequent verse Allah Ta'ālā informed Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام that all his prayers had been granted which would suggest that he was cured of his disability. However, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in his prayer to make Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام his partner in the prophethood also said هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا (He is more fluent in his tongue than me - 28:34) which would indicate that his speech's impediment was not fully cured and that the stammer persisted, though in a milder form. One of the defects which the Pharaoh found in Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was that وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ (he cannot express himself clearly - 43:52). Some people have argued that in his prayer Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had prayed to Allah Ta'ālā to loose the knot of his tongue only to the extent that others could understand his words. To that extent his stammer was cured but a trace of it still remained, which is not inconsistent with the grant of his prayer.

The fourth prayer was وَاجْعَل لِّي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي (and make for me an assistant from my own family - 20:29). The first three prayers of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام concerned his own person. This fourth prayer relates to the assembling of means which would facilitate the successful completion of his mission, and the most important among these was the appointment of a deputy or a helper, who would assist him in this task. The literal meaning of the word وزير is "one who carries a burden", and since a minister of a state carries the burden of responsibilities entrusted to him

by the ruler, he is called a minister (وزير). This shows the extreme foresight and prudence of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام because the success of any movement or enterprise depends on the selection of competent and dedicated supporters. With good and loyal workers it is easy to surmount all obstacles and hurdles, while with irresponsible and indifferent workers the best preparations and arrangements become futile. If one were to examine the causes of the decline of some of the modern states and the evils from which they suffer, they can all be attributed to the irresponsible conduct, mismanagement and incompetence of the ministers and advisers. It is related from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that when Allah Ta'ālā appoints someone to govern a country and wishes that the country should be well administered, He provides the ruler with a good Wazīr to assist him in whatever he does, and if he forgets to attend to some important task, the Wazīr is quick to remind him and to help him in what he intends to do. (Nisa'ī, from Qāsim Ibn Muḥammad).

In this prayer Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has specified that the helper he wants should be from his own family, the reason being that the behavior and conduct of a member of the family is well-known. Besides, there is mutual affection and understanding between the members of the family which greatly helps towards the accomplishment of the mission. But it is essential that the person selected should be competent and in possession of the merit necessary for the performance of his duties so that his selection may not be attributed to nepotism and favouritism. Nowadays when there is a scarcity of people of integrity and dedication, the ruler who appoints his own close relatives to be his Wazīr and deputies renders himself liable to public criticism. When, however, the standards of probity and integrity are high, such appointments are considered normal and are, in fact, conducive to the more efficient performance of sensitive assignments. Indeed all the four Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn (guided Caliphs) who succeeded the Holy Prophet ﷺ were in some way related to him.

In his prayer Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام first asked that the helper he required should be from his own family and then specifically asked for his brother Hārūn to be his Wazīr so that with the latter's support and assistance he could better perform the duties of his prophetic mission.

Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام was three or four years senior to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and died three years before the latter. When Sayyidnā Mūsā

عليه السلام petitioned to Allah Ta'ālā for his appointment as Wazīr he was in Egypt, and there he received, through an angel, information about his elevation to the status of a prophet and his appointment as an assistant to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. He was also instructed to receive Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام outside Egypt when he arrived there in pursuance of his mission to persuade the Pharaoh to accept the true faith. This he did.

وَاَشْرِكْهُ فِیْٓ اَمْرِیْ (and make him share my task - 20:32): Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had the power to appoint Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام as his Wazīr on his own, but he petitioned to Allah Ta'ālā to confer the appointment on his brother in order to seek His grace. Besides, he wanted him to share his prophethood and his mission and this power does not rest in any Prophet. Therefore he specially prayed to Allah Ta'ālā to make him a partner in his mission.

Good companions are a help in the better performance of worship and Dhikr (remembrance)

كَیْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِیْرًا وَّنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِیْرًا (So that we proclaim Your purity a lot and remember You a lot - 20:33,34). The advantage of making Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام a Wazīr and a partner in prophethood would be that both of them together would be able to pray to Allah Ta'ālā and glorify His name more often. Here the question may arise that a man by himself can also pray as often as he desires, so where was the need for a companion? The answer to this is that good companions and a conducive environment definitely contribute towards the better performance of worship and Dhikr. A person whose friends are negligent about Allah cannot devote himself to His worship with the same quality and quantity as the person who is fortunate to have the company of pious men and righteous friends devoted to Allah's worship and Dhikr.

Here Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام ended his petition, and he was rewarded with the good news that Allah Ta'ālā, the Almighty, had granted all his requests قَالَ قَدْ اُوْتِیْتَ سُؤْلَكَ یٰمُوْسٰی (you have been granted your request O Mūsā - 20:36).

Verses 37 - 44

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَیْكَ مَرَّةً اُخْرٰٓی ﴿۳۷﴾ اِذْ اَوْحَیْنَآ اِلٰٓی اُمِّكَ مَا یُوْحٰٓی

﴿٣٨﴾ أَنِ اقْذِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْذِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ
بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّي وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُ ۚ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّي ۚ
وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِي ﴿٣٩﴾ إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ
مَن يَكْفُلُهُ ۖ فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَقَتَلْتَ
نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا ۚ فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ
مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يَا مُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي ﴿٤١﴾
اذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا تَنِيَا فِي ذِكْرِي ﴿٤٢﴾ اذْهَبَا إِلَىٰ
فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ
﴿٤٤﴾

And We have bestowed Our favour on you once more, [37] **when We revealed to your mother what was to be revealed,** [38] **that is, "Put him (the baby) in the chest, then cast it into the river, then let the river throw it by the shore and it will be picked up by one who is enemy to Me and enemy to him". And I have cast love on you from Myself, and that you are fashioned under My eye.** [39] **(Remember) when your sister was going (to the family of the Pharaoh) and was saying, "Shall I point you to one who nurses him?" Thus We brought you back to your mother, so that her eyes might be cooled and she does not grieve. And you had killed a person, then We brought you out of the trouble; and We tested you with a great ordeal. Then you lived a number of years amidst the people of Madyan. After all this, you came O Mūsā, to a point, destined.** [40] **And I have fashioned you for Myself.** [41] **Go, you and your brother, with My signs, and do not be slack in My remembrance.** [42] **Go, both of you, to the Pharaoh; he has indeed transgressed.** [43] **So speak to him in soft words. May be, he takes to the advice or fears (Allah)".** [44]

Commentary

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰ (And We have bestowed Our favour on you once

more - 20:37). Having bestowed His gifts and special favours on Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ such as the honour of conversation with Allah, the grant of prophethood and miracles etc. Allah Ta'ālā reminds him of the benefits and favours which He had showered on him throughout his life - from his birth uptill that time and how He had saved his life from numerous risks and hazards. In relation to time, these benefits (which will be discussed in the following pages) pertain to an earlier period.

إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى (When We revealed to your mother what was to be revealed - 20:38) It means that the information given to the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was about a matter which could be learnt only through Divine revelation. This was that the Pharaoh's soldiers had orders to put to death all the male children belonging to the tribe of Banī Isrā'īl. She was told by means of a revelation that in order to save the life of her son she should put him in a box and float it down the river. She was re-assured not to entertain any apprehensions about his safety because Allah Ta'ālā would protect him and also return him to her. These are things which cannot be learnt by conjecture or guess work. The promise of Allah Ta'ālā, and the divine scheme to save his life are beyond human conception and can be made known through Divine revelation only.

Can a Revelation be sent to a person who is not a Prophet?

The truth of the matter is that the literal meaning of the word وحی (Waḥy) is a secret message which can be understood only by the person to whom it is addressed and by no one else. According to this literal sense, the word وَحِی (Waḥy) is not restricted to the prophets only and it can be used for people at large and even to animals. In the verse أَوْحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ (16:68) the word has been used in its literal and general sense, i.e. instructing the bees by means of وَحِی Waḥy. Similarly in this verse أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى أُمِّکَ (20:38) the word has been used in its general meaning and this does not necessarily mean that she was a prophet. Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام also received Divine messages though the scholars unanimously hold the view that she was not a prophet. The Waḥy of this type is made by means of a Divine inspiration (Ilhām اِلْهام). Allah Ta'ālā puts an idea into someone's heart and then confirms him in the belief that it is from Allah Ta'ālā. Saints and other devout people receive such inspirations. Abū Ḥayyān and some other scholars hold that sometimes such inspirations

can be made through angels as happened to Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام when Jibra'il عليه السلام appeared before her in the form of a human being and conveyed to her the will of Allah Ta'ālā. These inspirations (Ilhām: اِلْهَام), however, are specific to the person to whom they are made and are not meant for public or to be used for the propagation of the True Faith, whereas the Waḥy which is revealed to the prophets aims at appointing someone to reform people and enjoining upon him to invite people to the True Faith. It is the duty of such a person not only to have complete faith in His Waḥy himself, but also to bind others to accept his prophethood and the Waḥy and to pronounce as infidels those who deny him.

This is the difference between وحی الهام (Waḥy in the sense of Ilhām) or literal وحی and وحی نبوّت (the *waḥy* of a prophet) or technical Waḥy. Literal Waḥy has always been there and will be there for ever, whereas the prophethood and (Waḥy of a prophet) have ceased with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who was the last Prophet. Some respected scholars have given them the names of وحی تشریعی (legislative Waḥy) and وحی غیر تشریعی (non-legislative Waḥy). The false prophet of Qadiyan has used these definitions and certain writings of Sheikh Muhiyy-uddin Ibn 'Arabi in support of his claim to prophethood. His arguments, however, are contrary to what Ibn 'Arabi himself has written. A detailed discussion of this question will be found in my book ختم نبوت (Khatme Nabuwat).

The name of the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام

In Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī her name is given as Yuhanadh (يُوحَانذ) and in Itqān it is said that her name was Liḥyāna daughter of Yaṣmad Ibn Lawi (لحيانه بنت يصمد بن لاوى). Others say her name was Bārkha (بَارخَا) and still others that it was Bazakht (بازخت). Some people who dispense charms and amulets attribute strange properties to her name but according to Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī there is no basis for such a belief and probably it is nothing more than a hoax to entice innocent and ignorant people.

فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ (Then let the river throw it by the shore - 20:39.). The word يَمّ (Yamm) means river and here it refers most probably to the river Nile. In this verse the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has been commanded by Allah Ta'ālā to place the baby in a box and set him afloat in the river Nile. Simultaneously the river has been commanded to cast the box on its bank. But the question arises as to how a river can be commanded to do something while it has no sense or understanding.

Some scholars have answered this query with the argument that although here the word has been used in the imperative mood which implies a command, it is not really a command but is meant to convey the information that the river would cast the box on its bank. However some scholars have disputed this explanation and have claimed that the word is really a command and is addressed to the river Nile because everything that Allah Ta'ālā has created possesses emotions and a sense of feeling and it is these properties, which according to the Qur'ān, enable even trees and rocks to glorify the name of Allah Ta'ālā. It is, nevertheless, a fact that except the human beings, the Jinns, and the angels no other created thing possesses feelings and emotions to a degree where the precepts of Ḥalāl (permissible) and Ḥarām (forbidden) can be made binding on them. Maulānā Rūmī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has expressed the same idea in the following verse:-

خاک وباد وآب وآتش بندہ اند ☆ بامن وتو مردہ باحق زندہ اند

(Earth, wind, water and fire are all servants of Allah. To me and you they appear lifeless, but Allah knows that they too have life.)

يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّي وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُ (And it will be picked up by one who is enemy to Me and enemy to him - 20:39.). It means that a person who is an enemy of Allah Ta'ālā and also the enemy of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام will rescue the child. Here the reference is to the Pharaoh who was the enemy of Allah Ta'ālā because of his infidelity, but his enmity towards Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام needs some explanation since at that time he cherished no hostility towards the latter, rather he was incurring considerable expenditure on his upbringing. Perhaps it was due to his future enmity towards Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام which was even at that time in the knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā. Or again it is possible that even at that time he was the enemy and had reluctantly agreed to bring up Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام for the sake of his wife 'Āsiya. Yet when he felt the slightest suspicion about Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام he ordered his immediate execution and was prevented from carrying out his intention through the wise role of Sayyidah 'Āsiya. (Rūḥ and Maẓharī)

وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّي (And I have cast love on you from Myself - 20:39). The word "love" in this verse is in the sense of 'being loved', meaning thereby that Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام an

attribute that will make people show love towards him. This is the interpretation given to this verse by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ikrimah ﷺ. (Maẓharī)

وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلٰى عَيْنِىْ (And that you are fashioned under My eye - 20:39). The word صَنعتُ here means "good upbringing". The Arabs have a common phrase صَنعتُ فرسى (I trained my horse well). عَلٰى عَيْنِىْ , is used in the same sense as على حِفظِى i.e. it was Allah Ta'ālā's will that Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ should be brought up under His own eye, and for this purpose He chose the Pharaoh, the supreme authority in Egypt, to bring up Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ in his own palace, unaware all the time that the child that he was raising was his enemy. (Maẓharī)

اِذْ تَمْشِىٓ اُخْتُكَ (When your sister was going - 20:40). The story of the sister of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ following the box along the river and the subsequent events are alluded to in this verse, which ends with the words وَفَتَنّٰكَ فُتُوْنًا (We tested you with a great ordeal - 20:40). According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ these words mean "We tried you repeatedly", while Ḍaḥḥāk رحمه الله تعالى has translated them as "We subjected you to severe trials". Full details of this story have been given in a long Ḥadīth reported by Imām an-Nisa'ī رحمه الله تعالى in his book on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. This story is as follows:

Detailed Story of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ

In Kitāb-ut-Tafsīr of his Sunan, Imām Nisa'ī رحمه الله تعالى has reported a long Ḥadīth known as (حديث الفتون) (Ḥadīth-ul-Futūn) on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Ibn Kathīr has also reproduced the whole of it in his commentary and then has added that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ thought that it was مرفوع (Marfū'), in other words, it was a statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Ibn Kathīr has confirmed this view with the words: وَصَدَقَ ذٰلِكَ عِنْدِىْ (I too believe that this Ḥadīth is مرفوع), and also gave reason in support of his opinion. However, he has admitted that the version of this story given by Ibn Jabīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim رحمهم الله تعالى is the statement of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, and not of the Holy Prophet ﷺ while it contains some parts which were stated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It appears that Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has learnt this story from Ka'b al-Aḥbār as has happened in many other cases. Be that as it may, the critics like Imām Nasa'ī and Ibn Kathīr رحمهم الله تعالى hold it to be *marfū'* (statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and even those who do not accept it as such have never

challenged its contents, while a major part of this story is also mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān itself. Therefore, we would like to give full translation of this Ḥadīth which has many beneficial points having academic and practical value. Imām Nisa'ī رحمه الله تعالى has related this story which he learnt from Sa'id bin Jubair ﷺ that he (Sa'id Ibn Jubair ﷺ) asked Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ to explain to him the meaning of the expression وَفَتَنّٰكَ فُتُوْنًا , specially the word فُتُوْنًا which occurs in the verse relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام . Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said it was a long story which he would tell him (Saīid Ibn Jubair ﷺ) if he comes to him early the next morning. This he did and Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ told him the story which runs as follows:

One day the Pharaoh and his companions were talking about Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and the promise which Allah Ta'ālā had made to him to raise prophets and Kings from his progeny. Some of those present said that the Banī Isrā'īl were indeed expecting the birth of a prophet in their community and were in no doubt that Allah Ta'ālā's promise would be fulfilled. In the beginning they thought that Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام was the prophet promised by Allah Ta'ālā but when he died they said he was not the prophet promised to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and that there must surely come another prophet whose arrival would fulfill Allah Ta'ālā's promise. This information upset the Pharaoh who feared that if ever a prophet was born in the Isrā'īli community, whom he held in bondage, he (the prophet) would try to liberate them from their servitude. He, therefore, asked his friends to advise him how such a catastrophe could be avoided. After much deliberation they came to the unanimous conclusion that the only way to meet this contingency was to put to death every male child born in an Isrā'īli family. In pursuance of this decision, armed soldiers were sent out with orders to search every Isrā'īli house and kill all male children.

This blood-shed continued for some time but then the Egyptians realized that all their work was done and arduous duties performed by the Banī Isrā'īl and if the process of killing their male children continued then a time would come when, their old men having died a natural death, no young men would be left to serve them, and they themselves would have to perform all the hard and toilsome work. In order to overcome this problem they came up with another proposal according to which all male

children born in one year should be put to death while all those born in the following year should be spared. Such a device would ensure the availability of a continuous supply of labour force of young Isrā'īlis who could replace the older men, yet at the same time their number would not be large enough to pose a threat to the Pharaoh's authority. Everybody approved of this proposal and a law was passed for its implementation. (And now the wisdom and power of Allah Ta'ālā demonstrated itself in the following way). Sayyidnā Mūsā's عليه السلام mother gave birth to Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام in the year when, according to the law of the Pharaoh, male Isrā'īli children were spared and there was no danger to his life. But when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was conceived, his birth was expected in the year when the Pharaoh's decree required that all male Isrā'īli children be put to death. His mother was, therefore, greatly distressed at the thought of losing her son after its birth.

Here Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه paused in his story and said, "O Ibn Jubair! This was the first test (فتون) to which Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was put in that his life was at risk even before he was born."

Then Allah Ta'ālā, by means of وحی الهام (Divine inspiration) told the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to set her mind at rest.

لَا تَخَافِيْ وَلَا تَحْزَنِيْ إِنَّا رَآدُّوْهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ

Do not fear and do not grieve, surely We are going to bring him back to you and appoint him one of (Our) messengers - 28:7.

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was born Allah Ta'ālā commanded his mother to put him in a box and float him down the river Nile, which she did. After she had completed this task the Satan tried to perplex her with the suggestion that she had made a mistake by floating her son down the river because even if he had been put to death by the order of the Pharaoh she would at least have had the satisfaction of burying him with her own hands. Now there is no hope for him and he would probably be eaten up by the river animals. While the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was greatly worried at what the Satan had told her, the waves cast the box upon a rock where the Pharaoh's slave girls used to come for bathing and washing. When they saw the box they wanted to open it, but one of them said that if the box contained some valuable articles and they opened it, then the Pharaoh's wife would suspect that they had kept back

some of these for themselves and nothing that they could say would satisfy her. Accordingly, they brought the box unopened to the Pharaoh's wife.

When the Pharaoh's wife opened the box she found a boy and she instinctively felt a sudden surge of love for him - something which she had never experienced before. This was just as Allah Ta'ālā had told him (وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّي : And I have cast love on you from Myself). On the other hand, the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, in a state of puzzle caused by the Satan forgot the promise made to her by Allah Ta'ālā and was so overwhelmed by grief that all happiness forsook her heart leaving it an empty shell. وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فَارِغًا (And the heart of the mother of Mūsā became restless - 28:10). At the same time the Pharaoh's soldiers learnt about the presence of an Isrā'īli boy in the palace and they rushed with knives in their hands, and asked the Pharaoh's wife to surrender the boy so that they could put him to death.

Here Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه paused again and said, "O Ibn Jubair! This was the second test (فُتُون) to which Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was exposed."

The Pharaoh's wife remonstrated with the soldiers. "What?" She said, "Do you think this small and frail baby, if allowed to live, can ever increase the strength of Banī Isrā'īl? You wait here and I will go to the Pharaoh and plead for his life. I hope the Pharaoh will spare his life. If not, then I will not stand in your way and you can take him." Saying so, she went to the Pharaoh and said to him, "This child is the joy of my heart and yours also." The Pharaoh replied, "Yes, I know that he is the joy of your heart, but as for me, I do not need him."

At this point of the story Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه quoted the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying, "I swear by Allah that if on that occasion the Pharaoh had also admitted to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام being the joy of his heart, as his wife did, Allah Ta'ālā would have guided him along the path of the True Faith as He guided his wife."

(However, on account of his wife's urgent pleas the Pharaoh spared the life of the child). Now she needed a woman to nurse him. Many women offered their services but he would not suck from any of them

وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِن قَبْلُ (And We had already barred him (Mūsā) from (accepting) any suckling woman - 28:12). The Pharaoh's wife was in a real predicament. How will the child live if he was not nursed? She sent him with her servants to the market place to find any woman whose milk he would draw.

While these events were taking place in the Pharaoh's palace, the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was concerned by anguish at the fate of her son. She asked her daughter to go out and make inquiries about the box and the child that whether he was still alive or was he eaten up by the river animals. The promise which Allah had made to her when she was pregnant that he would protect her child and return him to her after a brief separation had completely escaped her memory. And then a miracle happened. As soon as the sister of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came to the market place she met the Pharaoh's female servants who held Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in their arms and were looking for a woman who could nurse him. She also noticed that the child would not accept milk from any woman which caused them great anxiety and distress. So she said to them, "I can take you to a family where there is a woman whose milk, I hope, the child will accept and who will bring him up with great love and affection." Thereupon the servants held her on the suspicion that she was, perhaps, the mother or a close relation of the child and for that reason spoke with such a confidence that the proposed family is well-wisher of and sympathetic to this child.

Here Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه stopped and told Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه that this was the third test (فُتُون) (for the sister of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was naturally frightened at being held like that but she kept her pose and told the servants that when she said that the family would love the child and serve him with devotion what she meant was that they would do so in the hope of getting access to the Pharaoh's court and thus obtaining some material benefit for themselves. This explanation satisfied the servants and they released her. She hurried back home and informed her mother of what had happened. Then both of them went to the market place where the servants stood with the baby. The mother took him in her arms and put him to her breast, and he sucked greedily until he was satiated. The Pharaoh's wife was overjoyed when she was informed that at last a woman had been found whose milk the child would take and ordered her

to be brought to her. On arrival the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ sensed that the Pharaoh's wife needed her and her services badly. At the same time she remembered Allah's promise to her that her son would be re-united to her after a brief separation. So she decided that she would offer her services on her own terms. The Pharaoh's wife told her that she was extremely fond of the child and could not bear parting from him for a moment. Therefore she should come and live in the palace and nurse the child. But Sayyidnā Mūsā's mother declined to do so. She said she had a child of her own who too had to be nursed and fed and therefore it was not possible for her to leave her home. However, if the child was entrusted to her care she would keep him with her and nurse him. She assured the Pharaoh's wife that if she agreed to her proposal no effort shall be wanting on her part to give him the best care and attention. There was no choice for the Pharaoh's wife and she accepted this arrangement. Thus the child was, re-united to his mother and Allah's promise to her was fulfilled.

After some time when Sayyidna Musa ﷺ grew comparatively stronger, the Pharaoh's wife asked the mother of Mūsā ﷺ to bring the child to her so that she may see him (as she was longing for him). She also told all the courtiers that the child was coming to their home and they must show him due respect and offer him gifts. She warned them that she would watch what they would do with the child. So when Mūsā ﷺ came out with his mother from her home, he was showered with gifts and presents right from that moment. The Pharaoh's wife was delighted to see him and gave him many expensive presents on her own and delivered all these presents to the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ. She then took him to the Pharaoh hoping that he too would give him presents. The Pharaoh took the child in his arms who suddenly clutched at his beard and pulled it causing his head to bow down. The courtiers were horrified and said to the Pharaoh: "We warned you about the promise of Allah to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ that a prophet will be born in the tribe of Banī Isrā'īl who will inherit your Kingdom and your wealth and will defeat and overthrow you. You have seen with your own eyes the first signs of the fulfillment of Allah's promise". The Pharaoh took the warning and ordered his soldiers to put the child to death.

Here Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ stopped again in his narration and

said, "O Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه ! This is the fourth test (فتون) for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام where death seemed so near".

The Pharaoh's wife at once came to the child's rescue and addressed her husband thus, "You have given this child to me. He is all mine. So what is all this fuss about?" The Pharaoh said, "Can't you see that by his action this child is warning me that one day he would overthrow me and deprive me of my Kingdom?" His wife replied, "I know a sure means of ascertaining whether his action was the action of an uninformed and innocent child or he deliberately intended to defy and challenge your authority. You order a servant to bring two trays. Put two live coals in one and two shining pearls in the other and place both the trays in front of the child. If he picks up the coal, that would be proof enough that he is totally unaware of the consequences of his action because nobody with any sense would put his hand in fire." The Pharaoh agreed to this test and when the two trays were placed before Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام he picked up the coal. (However there is another tradition that he wanted to reach for the pearls but Jibra'īl عليه السلام guided his hand and placed it on the coal). When the Pharaoh saw this he snatched away the coal from the child's hand to save him from harm. Thus the Pharaoh's wife was proved right. She turned to him and said, "O King! Now you know the truth." Thus Allah once again saved his life because He had chosen him for a very special mission.

(And so Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام continued to enjoy the favours of the Pharaoh and the great love of his mother until he grew to full manhood). Knowing in what esteem the royal family held him, the people of the Pharaoh did not dare to insult and torment Banī Isrā'īl as they used to do previously. One day he was out for a stroll in the city when he came across two persons who were quarrelling over some matter. One of them was a man of the Pharaoh and the other was an Isrā'īli. The latter called out to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to help him. Mūsā عليه السلام got very angry at the Pharaoh's man. How dare he bully an Isrā'īli in his presence knowing that he held a place of honour in the royal court, and also that he was full of sympathy for the Isrā'īlies (on account of the harsh treatment to which they were constantly subjected by the Egyptians). People in general thought that his sympathy for the Isrā'īlis was due to his being nursed and brought up by an Isrā'īli woman. It is also possible that Allah Ta'ālā

may have informed him through his mother or by some other means that he himself was an Isrā'īli and that the woman who had nursed him was in fact his own mother.

Anyway, being in extreme anger, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام hit the Egyptian with such force that he died on the spot. There were no witnesses to this incident except the Isrā'īli, and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was certain that he (the Isrā'īli) would not inform against him.

The Egyptian's death filled Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام with remorse and he said, هٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ إِنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ (This is some of Satan's act, He is indeed a clear enemy who misleads - 28:15). Then he prayed to Allah.

رَبِّ إِنِّيْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِيْ فَاغْفِرْلِيْ فَغَفَرَلَهٗ إِنَّهٗ هُوَالْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ

O my Lord! I have wronged myself, so forgive me. So He forgave him. Indeed He is the Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful - 28:16.

After this incident Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام made secret inquiries about the reaction of the Egyptian about the murder and whether the matter was reported to the Pharaoh. He learned that the report that was made to the Pharaoh merely said that an Isrā'īli had killed an Egyptian for which their tribe should make full retribution, and that no mercy should be shown to them.

The Pharaoh asked them to apprehend the murderer and produce him with full proof of his guilt because although he was their own king he did not think it was right to punish someone without sufficient evidence. He assured them that if they produced the offender with sufficient proof of his guilt he would not be spared. Thereupon people went out in search of the murderer but found no clue which could lead them to him.

The next day as Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came out of his house he saw the same Isrā'īli again fighting with an Egyptian. On seeing Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام he again called to him for help. But Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام who was full of remorse at what had happened the day before was very angry and blamed the Isrā'īlie for picking up fights. However, he wanted to stop the man of Pharaoh from attacking the Isrā'īli, and at the same time reproached the Isrā'īli for being so quarrelsome. The Isrā'īli, seeing Mūsā عليه السلام in anger was frightened and feared that he would kill him too. So he called out, "O Mūsā! Will you kill me too as you killed a man yesterday"?

And so they parted, but the Egyptian hastened to inform the people who were on the look out for the murderer that the Isrā'īli himself had accused Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام of having murdered a man the day before. The Pharaoh who was informed of this latest development at once sent his soldiers to apprehend Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and to execute him. The soldiers were confident that there was no way for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to escape and therefore they took the main road of the city searching for him. Somehow a follower of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام who lived in a far flung area of the city got wind of the Pharaoh's order to kill him and managed to reach Mūsā عليه السلام through smaller streets to warn him of the impending danger.

At this point in his narration, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه paused again and said, "O Ibn Jubair! This was the fifth test (فتون) for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام when death had overcome him but Allah Ta'ālā saved his life".

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام at once left the city and headed for Madyan. All his life was spent in comfort and luxury and he had never undertaken a task involving physical exertion. He was also unfamiliar with the surrounding areas and the roads connecting them. But he had full faith in Allah عَسٰى رَبِّىْٓ اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِىْ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ (I hope my Lord will guide me to the straight path - 28:22).

As he approached Madyan, he stopped at a well where people had gathered and were drawing water for their animals. There he saw two girls standing away from the crowd with their goats. He asked them why they stood apart to which they replied that being unable to contend with men for water they were waiting until they had finished watering their animals and then, if any water was left, they would give it to their goats, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was moved to pity for the girls and being physically a strong man he pushed forward and in no time he watered their goats. The girls went home with their herd and he sat under the shade of a tree and prayed: رَبِّ اِنِّىْ لِمَآ اَنْزَلْتَ اِلَىَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيْرٌ (O my Lord, I am in need of whatever good you may send down to me - 28:24). By this payer he sought Allah's help in providing him something to eat and a place to stay.

Now when the girls returned home with their herd earlier than usual their father was surprised, but the girls told him how a kind man had helped them and watered their goats. The father asked one of the girls to

bring the man home which she did, and when he heard the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, he said: ("Do not fear, you have escaped from the wrongdoing people." - 28:25).

One of the girls suggested to her father to engage Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام on wages and said يٰٓاَبَتِ اسْتَاْجِرْهُ اِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَاْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْاَمِيْنُ (Dear father, hire him; the best man you hire, is the one who is strong, trustworthy - 28:26). the father was disconcerted at her words and asked her how she knew that he was strong and trust-worthy. The girl replied that she witnessed his strength when he pushed aside all the other shepherds and drew water for her goats. And she knew him to be trustworthy because when she went to bring him home he cast his eyes down and did not raise them until she had conveyed to him his invitation. Then he told her to follow him and to guide him to this place from behind. Only a person who is totally trustworthy would conduct himself in such a manner. The father (He was Sayyidnā Shua'ib عليه السلام, a prophet of Allah), having being fully satisfied on this score, proposed to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام that if he would agree to work for him for eight years he would give the latter one of his daughters in marriage. He also said that he would like it if Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام , of his own free choice, worked for him for a further period of two years, but this would not be a condition for his marriage with his daughter. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام accepted these terms and ultimately, by Allah's command, rendered full ten years service to Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام.

Sayyidnā Sa'id Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه says, "Once a Christian scholar met me and asked me whether I knew how long Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام worked for Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام. This was before Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه had narrated to me this Ḥadīth. So I told him that I did not know the answer to his question. Afterwards when I met Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and put the same question to him he informed me that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was bound to do service for the contractual period of eight years which could not be reduced in any circumstances. Also, it was Allah's will that he should also serve the additional optional two years. Therefore, he did actually serve Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام for full ten years. Later, when I met the Christian scholar and gave him the information, he asked me whether the person from whom I learnt this was more knowledgeable than I was. I replied him in affirmative and told him that indeed he was a very learned

person and the best among us".

Having completed ten years of service with Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام , Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام departed from Madyan with his wife. He had chosen an unfrequented and unfamiliar route, and on a cold, dark night when he saw fire on the mount of Ṭūr he went there to bring some for his wife. There he saw strange sights, was granted the miracles of the staff (عصا) and the bright hand (يَدِ بَيْضَاء) and was also entrusted with the Mission of Prophethood. This story has been related by the Holy Qur'ān in the preceding pages. At the mount of Ṭūr he was also commanded by Allah to proceed to Egypt and place his message before the Pharaoh. He was anxious how he would discharge this duty when he has been declared by the royal court as an absconding offender and was under the sentence of death. Moreover, he recalled his stammer. So he prayed to Allah to remove these impediments. In response to his prayer Allah appointed his brother Hārūn عليه السلام to share his prophethood and through a revelation commanded the latter to receive him before he entered Egypt. The two brothers met and as commanded by Allah both of them went to the Pharaoh's court to invite him to accept the True Faith. After a while they were admitted to his presence after passing through several stages. They said to him: إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ "We are the messengers of your Lord". The Pharaoh asked them فَمَنْ رَّبُّكُمَا (Who then is the Lord of you two? - 20:49). Their reply to this question has been reported in the Qur'ān itself.

رَبُّنَا الَّذِيٓ اَعْطٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰى

Our Lord is He who gave everything its shape, then guidance - 20:50.

The Pharaoh then asked them what they wanted. He charged Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام with the murder of the Egyptian and at the same time reminded him how he had brought him up in his own palace and the great kindness he had shown towards him. The reply which Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام gave on both these points is mentioned in the Qur'ān. That is, the murder of the Egyptian was a mistake for which he had asked Allah's forgiveness. As for the second point, he accused the Pharaoh of having enslaved the Banī Isrā'īl and of subjecting them to oppression. These things could not be allowed to continue for ever and in consequence an inevitable destiny so decreed that he should be brought up in the

Pharaoh's palace. It was Allah's will and so it came to pass and he owed no gratitude to anyone. He then asked the Pharaoh to accept the True Faith and free the Banī Isrā'īl from the slavery. The Pharaoh refused, and asked Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to show some sign to prove his claim of prophethood. Mūsā عليه السلام cast his staff (عصا) on the ground and it turned into a huge snake, which advanced towards the Pharaoh with a fearsome manner. In great fright the Pharaoh crawled under his throne and begged Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to save his life. Mūsā عليه السلام picked up the snake and it became a staff again. He then showed the Pharaoh his second miracle. He pressed his hand under his armpit and when he brought it out it was shinning brilliantly. Then he repeated the action and his hand became normal.

The Pharaoh was in great terror at what he had seen. He assembled all his advisors and asked them to consider and decide how best they could meet the threat posed by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. Having discussed the matter among themselves, the advisors assured him that the matter was not as serious as appeared at first sight. Those two men were magicians who, by their sorcery, wanted to deprive him of his Kingdom and also to destroy their religion which regarded him as god, worthy of worship. They advised him not to accept any demand made by the two magicians and on the other hand to invite all the great magicians living in Egypt who would, by their skill, prevail upon the two visiting magicians.

The Pharaoh accepted this advice. He ordered all the famous magicians in Egypt to be brought before him, and when they came he told them what was expected of them. They asked the Pharaoh what was the special trick of the magician whom they were to confront. They were informed that he could turn his staff into a snake. At this, the magicians said in a casual manner that it was not a big deal. They too could change staffs and ropes into snakes and that nobody could beat them at that trick. They also wanted to know what their reward would be if they defeated their opponent. The Pharaoh replied, "If you are successful in this contest I will make you part of my own family and you will be given everything that you desire".

The magicians in agreement with Mūsā عليه السلام appointed the morning of the day of their festival for the contest. Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه reports that the

day of their festival was the 10th of Muḥarram. A large number of people were gathered in a vast open space to see the contest. They were in no doubt about its outcome. They scoffed at Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ and said tauntingly that in case he got the better of their own magicians, they would accept his religion لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ (So that we may follow the sorcerers if they are victorious - 26:40).

When everything was ready, the Egyptians asked Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ whether he would like to begin the contest or he wanted them to make the start. He invited them to show their tricks first. So they threw their staffs and ropes with the words بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ (By the majesty of the Pharaoh we are going to prevail definitely - 26:44) which at once turned into creeping, coiling snakes.

This sight evoked fear in the heart of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ. فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيْفَةً مُّوْسٰى (So, Musa concealed some fear in his heart - 20:67). Now this fear could be a natural human reaction and not even prophets are free from it. Or it may be that he was overtaken by a momentary doubt about the success of his own mission. But Allah commanded him by means of revelation to cast his staff. As he did so, it turned into a huge snake and ate up all the snakes which the Egyptians had produced with their tricks. The magicians who knew everything about magic at once realized that the performance of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was no magic but a miracle from Allah. So they openly announced their faith in the One and Only Allah and accepted the religion brought by Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ . They said they repented their past sins and abjured the faith of their forefathers. Thus, Allah effectively belittled the Pharaoh and his companions frustrating their evil designs فَغُلِبُوْا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوْا صٰغِرِيْنَ (So, they were overcome there and turned humiliated - 7:119). It is also reported that while the contest was in progress 'Āsiya, the Pharaoh's wife, put on a humble garb and prayed to Allah for Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ . The people of Pharaoh were under the impression that she was anxious for the Pharaoh and was praying for him while all her worries were about Mūsā ﷺ.

The Pharaoh was now in a dilemma. He had no intention of allowing Banī Isrā'īl to leave Egypt. In the years that followed Egypt was visited by several calamities such as floods, locusts, lice, frogs appearing in food and utensils etc. (these have been described in the Qur'ān as آيات مفصلات (Signs distinct 7:133). The Pharaoh would, at the time of each such

visitation, approach Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and promised to release Banī Isrā'īl from his bondage and let them leave Egypt if he prayed to Allah to deliver him from the disaster. But as soon as the affliction was removed through the prayers of Mūsā عليه السلام the Pharaoh reneged on his promise. This happened several times until Allah commanded Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to take Banī Isrā'īl with him and leave Egypt. One night he and the whole tribe of Banī Isrā'īl quietly stole out of Egypt. The next morning when the Pharaoh discovered their escape, he assembled his army and went after them. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and his men soon came to a river which had to be crossed. Allah commanded the river that when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام would strike its water with his staff it should part to make twelve exits for the twelve tribes of Banī Isrā'īl and that when they had crossed over, it should resume its normal flow again.

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام reached the river, he forgot that if he struck the river with his staff it would open up twelve passages for him and his men. As they stood there not knowing what to do, the Pharaoh and his army appeared in the distance. In utter despair they cried إِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُونَ (Surely we are overtaken - 26:61). At that critical moment Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام remembered Allah's promise to him. He at once struck his staff on the water and the river parted showing twelve passageways. Quickly he and his men went across. The Pharaoh and his army who were hard on their heels followed them over the passageways but when they reached the midstream and the last of the Banī Isrā'īl had crossed over safely, the water of the river flowed over the passageways as commanded by Allah. And so the Pharaoh and his entire army perished under the eyes of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and his men. Some of the men feared that the Pharaoh might have escaped death and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام prayed to Allah to reveal his death to them. Then by the command of Allah the Pharaoh's dead body was tossed out of the river and everybody witnessed his end.

As Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Banī Isrā'īl continued their journey they came across a people who worshipped idols which they themselves had fashioned. Banī Isrā'īl were tempted and they said to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام يٰمُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَّنَا إِلٰهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ إِنَّ هٰؤُلَاءِ مُتَبَّرٌ مَّا هُمْ فِيهِ : (O Mūsā! make a god for us like they have gods". He (Mūsā) said, "You are really an ignorant people. What these people are in, is sure to be destroyed" - 7:138,

139). He also reminded them of the miracles which Allah had revealed in their behalf and the bounties which He had showered on them and asked them how they could entertain such wicked ideas. Having admonished them thus, he and his party proceeded on their travel until they came to a place where they camped. There he said to his men, "You stay here while I go to my Lord. I will return after thirty days. In my absence my brother Hārūn will act as my deputy and you should obey him in all matters".

Then Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام went to the mount of Ṭūr where he was commanded by Allah to fast for thirty continuous days in order to prepare himself for conversation with Him. After fasting for thirty days continuously he sensed a bad odor in his mouth which is usual when people fast for long periods, and he thought it would be grossly irreverent for him to appear before Allah and receive His message in that state. So he cleaned his mouth with an aromatic grass which grew on a hill close by. When he approached the August presence, Allah asked him why he had broken the fast. He replied, "O Lord! I merely wished to get rid of the offensive smell in my mouth before coming to Your presence". Allah said, "O Mūsā! Surely you know that the odor from the mouth of a person who observes fast is more pleasant to Us than the fragrance of the perfume of musk. Go back; fast for ten more days and then return to Us." Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام obeyed Allah's command.

After the departure of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام his brother Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام assembled Banī Isrā'īl and addressed them saying, "You have brought along with you many things which you either borrowed from the people of the Pharaoh (Egyptians) or which were deposited with you by them, as a trust. At the same time there are many things belonging to you which you loaned to them or left with them in trust. You seem to think that you can appropriate to yourself the Egyptian's property in lieu of what you have left behind with them. I do not consider this deal as lawful; and since we cannot return to the Egyptians what really belongs to them, I suggest that we dig a pit and bury all such property in it". Banī Isrā'īl accepted this advice and threw everything into the pit. Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام then had a big fire built over it so that everything was reduced to ashes. He said, "Now it is neither theirs nor ours".

Among the Banī Isrā'īl there was a man by the name of Sāmirī who, though not one of them, had migrated with them when they left Egypt.

He came from a tribe who worshipped cows. Being an observant person he noticed a strange phenomenon namely that wherever Sayyidnā Jibra'il ﷺ put his foot, he left traces of life. He picked up a handful of earth from one such place and as he was going along he met Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ who thought that the man had in his hand something of value belonging to the Egyptians. He told him to throw it into the pit as the others had done, but Sāmiri said that what he held in his hand was the earth from the footprints of Sayyidnā Jibra'il ﷺ with whose help they all had crossed the river and that he would not throw it away unless Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ promised to pray to Allah for the fulfillment of a wish which he cherished in his heart. On the latter's promise to do so he threw the earth in this pit and as promised, Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ prayed to Allah to grant Sāmiri his wish. Thereupon Sāmiri prayed, "I wish that all the gold, silver, iron and brass which has been thrown in this may take the shape of a calf". Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ had already prayed to Allah on behalf of Sāmiri, and his prayer was granted by Allah. So all the valuables and other metals which had been thrown in the pit assumed the cast of a calf which had no life but produced a sound like the bellow of a bull. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه it was not the sound of a living thing but more like the low-pitched sound of wind passing through a hollow passage.

This strange event greatly perplexed the Banī Isrā'īl and split them into several groups. Sāmiri told them that the calf was the true God and that Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had strayed from the right path. One group accepted his claim and adopted the worship of the calf. Another group reserved their judgment until Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ would explain to them how the matter stood, while a third group rejected Sāmiri's claim outright and refused to accept the calf as their god.

When Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ saw this mischief and discord he admonished the people and said:

يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهٖ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِىْ وَاَطِيْعُوْٓا اَمْرِىْ

"O my people! You have only been led astray with it, and your Lord is the Raḥmān (All-Merciful). So follow me and obey my command." - 20:90.

But they asked about Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ why did not he come back

while he had promised to return after thirty days and even after forty days nearing completion there was no news of him. Some foolish persons suggested that perhaps he had lost his Allah and was even at that time searching for Him.

While these events were taking place at the camp, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام having completed forty days of fasting was honoured with conversing with Allah Ta'ālā who informed him of the disorder into which Banī Isrā'īl had fallen:

فَرَجَعَ مُوسٰى إِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ غَضْبَانَ اَسِفًا

So Mūsā went back to his people in anger and sorrow. (20:86)

He put aside the Tablets of Torah which he had brought from the mount of Ṭūr and pulled his brother Hārūn by the hairs. Later, when he had calmed down and Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام had given an account of everything that had happened, he accepted the explanation given by his brother and prayed to Allah to forgive him.

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام then went to Sāmiri and asked him to explain his actions. He replied:

فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ اَثَرِ الرَّسُوْلِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذٰلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِيْ نَفْسِيْ

I picked up a handful of dust from under the foot of the messenger (the angel). Then I cast it, and thus my inner self tempted me - 20:96.

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام then replied to him with the following words:

فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ لَا مِسَاسَ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّنْ تُخْلَفَهٗ وَانْظُرْ إِلٰٓى إِلٰهِكَ الَّذِيْ ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَّنُحَرِّقَنَّهٗ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهٗ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا

He (Musa) said, "Then go away, for your fate in this life is to say: Do not touch me. And, of course, you have another promise, never to be held back from you. And look at your god to which you stayed devoted. We will certainly burn it, then we will scatter it thoroughly in the sea. (20:97)

Banī Isrā'īl now realized that they had been led astray and they admired those who agreed with Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام in negating the divinity of the calf. They begged Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to pray to Allah to forgive them and that they were ready to expiate for their sins. Sayyidnā

Mūsā ﷺ took pains in selecting seventy persons from amongst them who were well-known for their virtue and piety and who, according to his knowledge had abstained from the worship of the calf. He led this selected group to the mount of Ṭūr where all of them might beseech Allah's Mercy. But as they approached the mount, the earth shook in a violent earthquake. On this, Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ felt greatly embarrassed in front of the group he was leading as well as before his people in general, therefore he pleaded to Allah:

رَبِّ لَوْشِئْتَ اَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ وَاِيَّایَ اَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَآءُ مِنَّا

"My Lord, had it been Your will, You could have destroyed them earlier, and me too. Would you destroy us for what the foolish among them have done?" - 7:155.

It then transpired that the cause of the earthquake was that despite all his inquiries and precautions some of the men included in the delegation had indeed worshipped the calf and still cherished a sense of reverence for it.

Allah Ta'ālā replied to the prayer of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ as follows:

وَرَحْمَتِیْ وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ فَسَاَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِیْنَ یَتَّقُوْنَ وَیُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَالَّذِیْنَ هُمْ بِاٰیٰتِنَا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ. اَلَّذِیْنَ یَتَّبِعُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ النَّبِیَّ الْاُمِّیَّ الَّذِیْ یَجِدُوْنَهٗ مَكْتُوْبًا عِنْدَ هُمْ فِی التَّوْرٰاةِ وَالْاِنْجِیْلِ

"And My mercy extends to everything. So, I shall write it for those who fear, and pay Zakāh, and those who do believe in Our verses. Those who follow the Messenger, the *Ummī* (unlettered) prophet whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Injīl (The gospels)". (7:156, 157)

Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ said, "O Lord! I had prayed to You on behalf of my people who have repented their evil deeds but You have just informed me that Your mercy encompasses everyone but the Banī Isrā'īl. O Lord! Why was my birth not delayed and why was I not born among the favoured people of the unlettered Prophet?" On this, Allah told him that the only way through which Banī Isrā'īl's repentance could be accepted by Him was that each one of them should slay with sword anyone he finds from among his relations, be he his father or son and at the same spot where the sin of worshipping the calf was committed. Thereupon those among the seventy delegates whom Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had

brought with him in the belief that they were pious people, but who in their hearts felt reverence for the calf, also repented and obeyed the rigorous condition for the expiation of their sins, and when this was done, Allah forgave the sins of the slayers as well as the slain.

It will be recalled that when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام returned to his people from the Ṭūr on learning that they had fallen into mischief he had put aside in anger the Tablets which he had brought from the mount. He now picked them up and led his people towards the Holy land (Syria). On the way they passed by a city where a mighty and powerful people lived whose unusual appearance inspired fear in the hearts of all who saw them. Many tales of their valour and cruelty were related to the Banī Isrā'īl so that when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام proposed to enter the city they refused and said, "O Mūsā! These people are tyrants and we cannot face them. We will not enter this city so long as they are there, but if somehow, they can be made to leave the city we will gladly enter it." Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام argued with them but they were adamant and refused to be moved.

The Holy Qur'ān has, at another place, mentioned that two persons tried to convince Banī Isrā'īl to enter the city. According to Yazid Ibn Hārūn, a narrator of this report, Sayyidnā Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has interpreted the relevant verse to the effect that these two men belonged to the tyrant nation. They after coming out from the city had embraced the faith of Mūsā عليه السلام and realized that Banī Isrā'īl are terrified by their nation. Therefore, they said to Banī Isrā'īl, "We are fully aware of the nature of our own nation. You are terrified of their high stature and their large number, but in reality they have no strength of heart, nor do they have courage to face you. If you proceed to the gate of the city, you will see that they will surrender and you will prevail." Some commentators have held that these two men were from Banī Isrā'īl and convinced them to proceed to the city, but even after hearing their advice they flatly refused and addressed Sayyidna Mūsā عليه السلام in the most absurd manner as mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān in the following words:

They said:

يٰمُوْسٰى اِنَّا لَنْ نَّدْخُلَهَآ اَبَدًا مَّادَامُوْا فِيْهَا فَاذْهَبْ اَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَآ اِنَّا هٰهُنَا قٰعِدُوْنَ

"O Mūsā! we shall never enter it, in any case, so long as they are there. So go, you and your Lord, and fight. As for us, We are

sitting right here." (5:24)

Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had seen enough of the arrogance and defiant attitude of Banī Isrā'īl in spite of the numerous favours and benefits showered upon them by Allah and had refrained so far from praying against them for their provocations. But the rude reply which they now gave him filled his heart with sorrow and he prayed against them and termed them as فَاسِقِيْنَ (Transgressors). Allah Ta'ālā accepted his prayer, and holding them as فَاسِقِيْنَ (transgressors), denied them entry into the Holy Land for forty years and confined them to an open plain where they wandered aimlessly from morning till evening. However since Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was also with them, Allah favoured them with many gifts even while they suffered punishment. Wherever they went in this waterless desert of Tīh (Sinai) a constant cloud shaded them from the burning sun. For food, Allah sent to them من و سلوی (Manna is a viscous substance from the ash tree and Salwa is a quail-like bird). As if by a miracle their clothes were never torn nor did they become dirty. They were given a square stone and Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was instructed to strike it with his staff whenever they needed water and twelve springs of sweet water - three on each side - gushed out of it to serve the twelve tribes of Banī Isrā'īl, thus avoiding all disputes. At the end of their journeys wherever they camped, they found that the square stone was there already. (Qurṭubī)

According to the present narration of this Ḥadīth-ul-Futūn, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ had attributed it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbās ؓ did not tell this story on his own, or after hearing it from someone else is the correct view in my opinion which is supported by the following event:

When Sayyidnā Mu'awyia ؓ heard this Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, he denied the truth of that part of the story which said that while the men of the Pharaoh were unable to find any clue which could lead them to the murderer of the Egyptian (i.e. Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ), it was disclosed by the second Egyptian with whom the Isrā'īli of the previous day was fighting. Sayyidnā Mu'awyia's ؓ objection was that the Egyptian being ignorant of the previous day's murder could not have known and disclosed the name of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ as the murder. The only witness to the event was the Isrā'īli.

When Sayyidnā Mu'awyia ﷺ expressed his doubts about this part of the Ḥadīth Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ got angry and took the former by the hand and brought him to Sa'd Ibn Mālik Zuhri and asked him if he remembered the occasion when the Holy Prophet ﷺ related the story about the murdered Egyptian. When Sa'd Ibn Mālik ﷺ replied in the affirmative he asked him, "Now tell me whether it was the Isrā'īli or the Egyptian who brought information about the murderer to the Pharaoh"?, Sa'd Ibn Mālik ﷺ replied that it was the Egyptian because he had heard the Isrā'īli say that the murder was committed by Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ and reported the matter to the Pharaoh. Imām Nasa'ī has reproduced this long Ḥadīth in كتاب التفسير of his larger book Al-Sunan al-Kubrā.

Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have both reproduced this Ḥadīth in detail in their Commentaries and have expressed the view that it is not مَرْفُوْع (*marfū'*) i.e. it is not mentioned by the Holy Prophet ﷺ but is in the words of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ which he has taken from those Isrā'īli traditions of Ka'b al-Aḥbār whose reproduction and narration is permissible. It is true, however, that at places it contains sentences of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Ibn Kathīr has reproduced this Ḥadīth in his Commentary and after giving his own arguments says that, like Tabari and Ibn Abī Ḥatim, Sheikh Abul Hajjaj Mizzi also believes that this tradition is مَوْقُوْف which means that it is a saying of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and not of the Holy Prophet ﷺ .

The results, lessons and the great benefits to be obtained from the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ

The importance which the Qur'ān attaches to the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ is evident from the fact that it is repeated frequently in several Sūrahs, the reason being that it contains numerous lessons for mankind, instances of high wisdom and unusual manifestation of the Supreme Power of Allah. All these things confirm a true believer in his beliefs, and provide for him practical and moral guidance. A brief account of some of these is given in the following paragraphs.

The Pharaoh's foolish plan and how Allah frustrated it

On being told that a boy born to the Isrā'īlites would cause the overthrow of his Kingdom, the Pharaoh issued orders that all male children born among the Isrā'īlies should be put to death. Later on for his

personal and diplomatic reasons he modified those orders so that male children born in alternate years only were put to death. Allah had the power to bring about the birth of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in the year in which the male children born to the Isrā'īlies were spared, but He willed that the tyrant's brutal plan should recoil on himself. Therefore it was decreed that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام should be born in the year when the new born Isrā'īli boys were to be put to death. Then Allah in His Supreme Wisdom created a situation in which the Pharaoh took Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام under his care and brought him up in his own palace. While all the Isrā'īli male children were being put to death lest any of them pose a threat to the Pharaoh's authority, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام grew up in the luxury of the royal palace where he was loved and respected by everyone.

Divine favours for the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام

If Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had accepted the milk from any other wet-nurse he would have spent his early years in the Pharaoh's palace and his mother would have suffered great anguish at being separated from her son. Also he would have been nursed by an infidel woman. But an inscrutable decree of providence saved him from being nourished by an infidel woman and at the same time united him with his mother. The Pharaoh and his wife felt beholden to her and not only showered gifts on her but also gave her good remuneration for her services. By bringing Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to her own house she escaped the necessity of having to live in the Pharaoh's palace like any other servant. فَتَبَارَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِيْنَ.

Good news for industrialists and traders

There is a Ḥadīth according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that an industrialist or a businessman who, while engaged in his trade also desired to win the good-will of Allah was like the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, who nursed her own child and at the same time was paid for her services (Ibn Kathīr). It means that if a mason who builds a mosque, a school or a building for public use is concerned only with his wages, he would receive it, but nothing more. But if he undertook to construct these buildings in preference to other jobs with the intention that these would be used for good purposes and would benefit pious persons then, like the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, he would receive his wages as well as the religious benefit.

The chosen servants of Allah are gifted with a special attribute so that all who see them, love them

وَاَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّى

And I have cast love on you from Myself - 20:39.

This verse suggests that Allah bestows upon his chosen servants a special grace which causes all men, friend or foe, to love them. Of course, the prophets enjoy this grace to a much greater degree, but many saints are also known to have possessed it.

Why was the murder of the Egyptian by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام regarded as a sin?

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام saw an Egyptian infidel fighting an Isrā'īli Muslim, he struck the former with a blow causing his death. He described this act as an act of Satan and prayed to Allah for forgiveness and Allah accepted his prayer.

Here is a point for consideration by jurists. This Egyptian was an infidel and a citizen of a non-Muslim state who had no peace agreement between him and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام . Also he could not be given the status of a ذِمِّی (Dhimmi: A non-Muslim under Muslim rule) who is entitled to full protection from the Muslims. He was a non-Muslim citizen of دارالحرب (Enemy country) and according to Muslim law killing such a person does not constitute a sin. So why was the murder of the Egyptian described as an act of Satan and a sin?

In none of the commentaries has this issue been brought up for consideration. Some time back, at the behest of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi رحمه الله تعالى I began writing my book احکام القران and when I came to this issue, I sought his guidance, and his explanation was that although there was no covenant between Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and the Egyptian nor did he enjoy the status of a Dhimmi (a non-Muslim citizen of a Muslim state) yet neither of them was the head of a state. They were both subjects of the Pharaoh and at peace with each other. This was for all practical purposes an implied covenant between the two of them. Thus the murder of the Egyptian was in the nature of violation of the implied compact and therefore a sin. And since the murder was not deliberate but accidental, it does not adversely affect the sanctity of his Prophethood. For this reason in pre-partition India when both the Muslims and the Hindus

lived under the British rule, Hadrat Maulānā Thānavi رحمه الله تعالى did not consider it lawful for the Muslims to take the life or property of a Hindu.

Helping the weak and public service have their own rewards both in this world and in the hereafter

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام reached the outskirts of Madyan, he noticed two girls who stood aside because they were too weak to contend against men and water their goats. These girls were complete strangers to him and he himself was a homeless wanderer. But being a decent man he was prompted to come to their help. He watered their goats and by this act of kindness he gained the pleasure of Allah. And his worldly reward was that Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام gave him his daughter in marriage.

The philosophy and benefits of a situation in which one Messenger was an employee and the other an employer

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came to the house of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام as an honoured guest. After sometime when he felt sufficiently secure from pursuit by the Pharaoh's soldiers, Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام, at the suggestion of his daughter, offered him employment on wages. This offer embodies a deep philosophy from Allah and guidance for mankind.

First: Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام was a Prophet of Allah Ta'ālā and it was not beyond his means to entertain a traveler for sometime without asking for recompense. But it seems that by prophetic wisdom he had perceived that being a person of noble character Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام would not accept his hospitality much longer and would move to some other place where he might suffer hardship. He therefore made a straight offer of employment. Here is a lesson that it is not proper to become a burden on somebody's hospitality for long periods.

Second: Allah Ta'ālā had chosen Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام for the grant of prophethood, and although toil and hard labour are neither the pre-conditions for prophethood, nor can the prophethood be obtained by any amount of exertion and effort, because it is a pure gift from Allah, yet His Supreme Wisdom had decreed that the prophets should also undergo a period of strenuous physical labour as a means of character building and for reforming others. The life of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had been spent in comfort and luxury and since he was destined to be a leader of mankind and to reform their moral life, his service with Sayyidnā Shu'aib

عليه السلام was to accustom him to hard work and to prepare him for the great mission for which Allah had chosen him.

Third: Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was given the task of tending the flocks of goats of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام . It is rather strange that many prophets have, at one time or the other, performed similar duties. Now a goat often breaks away from the main flock to the great annoyance of the shepherd. If he lets it stray it may be lost or even fall prey to a wolf, and if he punishes it, he may cause injury to the delicate animal. Therefore he has to be very patient with his flock. The same is the case with prophets; they can neither ignore the errant humanity nor can they be too severe in disciplining them. They have to conduct themselves with great patience and forbearance.

How to choose the best man for a job

The daughter of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام suggested to her father that he should employ Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in his service as the latter was both strong and honest (قوی'اَمِین). The word قوی (*qawiyy*: strong) is applied to a person who is strong and has ability to perform satisfactorily the duties which are entrusted to him, and اَمِین (*amīn*, honest) means that the record of his past life proves his honesty and integrity.

These two brief words, if considered in depth, cover all the qualities for selecting a person for different jobs and offices, public or private. In some cases even the detailed parameters laid down for the selection of employees in contemporary institutions are not so comprehensive as these two words are. Honesty, in particular, is something totally neglected today when selecting a candidate, the entire importance being given to academic degrees only. The corruption, disorder and mismanagement seen in public and private institutions at present is mainly caused by neglecting honesty and integrity in the employees. If a person is qualified and wise, but devoid of honesty, he may devise ways to protect himself from rules against his inefficiency and corruption. This is exactly what has rendered many public and private institutions inefficient and corrupt. Islam has therefore laid great emphasis on honesty and integrity, the blessings of which have been witnessed by the world through the centuries.

Difference between the approach of magicians and that of the prophets

The address which the Pharaoh delivered to his magicians in which he warned them of the threat to the country called for a patriotic response from the magicians, but they exploited the situation and negotiated their reward in case they gained victory over Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام . On the other hand the prophets declare openly that they do not expect any reward for their services.

وَلَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ

I do not claim from you any reward for it - 26:109

Among the many factors for the success of their mission is the denial of all material rewards for their services. Nowadays the non-payment of remuneration to scholars, jurists, preachers etc. from Government sources has compelled them to accept payment for their services which, though permitted by the later jurists, has reduced the effectiveness of their mission.

Truth about the magic of the Egyptian magicians

The Egyptian magicians caused their sticks and ropes to appear as if they had really turned into snakes. The question is whether they were in reality turned into snakes. The Qur'ān says:

يُخَيَّلُ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ اَنَّهَا تَسْعٰى

Seemed to him, due to their magic as if they were running - 20:66.

This shows that they did not really become snakes, but it was some kind of mesmerism which cast a hypnotic spell on those present, to whom they appeared as running snakes. This, of course, does not mean that things or substances cannot be transformed by magic, but the Egyptian magicians did not possess these powers.

Division into tribes in matters of social life is not censurable

Islam has condemned the notion that regional, linguistic, ethnic and tribal divisions become the basis of nationalism. It has encouraged in all possible manners the elimination of all such differences and prejudices. The very foundation of Muslim polity rests on Islamic nationalism where

people of diverse description, race, lineage and culture constitute one single nation. The first step which the Holy Prophet ﷺ took when laying down the foundations of the Islamic state at Madīnah was to unite the Muhajirs and the Anṣār into a single bond of brotherhood. In his last sermon (حجة الوداع) he ﷺ laid down the rule, for all times to come, that prejudices and divisions based on geographical region, race and language are the idols which Islam has demolished. Nevertheless, their distinctions in the matters of social life have been duly recognized and permitted within reasonable limits. This is to avoid any hardship for the people due to the fact that the customs of living, dress, food etc. vary from one area to the other and from one tribe to another.

The Isrā'īlites whom Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام led out of Egypt were divided into twelve tribes and when crossing the river on their flight twelve passageways were cleared, one for each tribe. Similarly in the plain of Tīh (the waterless desert where Banī Isrā'īl wandered for forty years) the stone, by a miracle shot forth twelve springs of water in order that the twelve tribes of Banī Isrā'īl might not engage in strife over the use of water.

Appointment of a deputy to manage the affairs of a community

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام parted from his people in order to engage himself in prayers at the mount of Ṭūr for thirty days, he appointed Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام as his deputy during his absence and commanded his people to obey the latter in all matters, so that disputes and quarrels might not rise among them. This shows that when the head of a community or a family proceeds on a journey, he should, following the practice of the prophets, appoint a deputy to maintain order and discipline among them.

A disagreeable course of action may temporarily be adopted if it prevents disruption among Muslims

When Banī Isrā'īl started worshipping the calf during the absence of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام remonstrated with them but did not go to the extent of severing all relations with them and his justification was that any harsh action by him would have caused a split among the Banī Isrā'īl.

إِنِّى خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَآءِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِى

"I feared that you would say, 'You have caused discord among the children of Isrā'īl and did not observe my advice'". (20:94)

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام accepted this explanation and prayed to Allah in favor of his brother. It leads to the principle that it is permissible to take a lenient view against an evil as a temporary expediency to prevent discord and strife among Muslims.

A vital principle of Prophetic Mission

When ordering Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام to go to Egypt and invite the Pharaoh to the path of righteousness, Allah also enjoined upon them to adopt a soft attitude toward him. 'فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ' (So, speak to him in soft words. May be, he takes to the advice or fears [Allah] - 20:44). Here an important principle has been enunciated that those who wish to reform people and lead them to a life of virtue should always be gentle and amiable towards their opponents however obstinate and perverse they may be. By such methods alone can they be persuaded to give heed to the message brought to them by the prophets.

The Pharaoh, who claimed to be a god, was also absolutely guilty of the massacre of thousands of Isrā'īli children just to safeguard his life and his Kingdom. But when Allah sent the two messengers to him, He gave them a guideline, namely that they should talk to him in a gentle and persuasive manner so that he might ponder and reflect on the message which they had brought to him. This guideline was emphasized in spite of the fact that Allah knew that the Pharaoh would never give up his obduracy nor his perverse ways. Here the intention was to bind the prophets to a conduct which might induce people to reflect and ultimately instill the fear of Allah in their hearts.

An unfortunate tendency is in vogue among the scholars of criticizing each other which they regard as a service to Islam. There is a need for curbing this tendency and the true teaching of Islam should be adopted.

Verses 45 - 50

قَالَا رَبَّنَآ إِنَّنَا نَخَافُ أَنْ يَّفْرُطَ عَلَيْنَآ أَوْ أَنْ يَّطْغٰى ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخَافَآ إِنَّنِى مَعَكُمَآ أَسْمَعُ وَأَرٰى ﴿٤٦﴾ فَأْتِيٰهُ فَقُولَآ إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ

مَعَنَا بَنِیۤ اِسۡرَآءِیۡلَ ۙ وَلَا تُعَذِّبۡهُمۡ ؕ قَدۡ جِئۡنٰكَ بِاٰیَةٍ مِّنۡ رَّبِّكَ ؕ وَالسَّلٰمُ عَلٰی مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الۡهُدٰی ﴿۴۷﴾ اِنَّا قَدۡ اُوۡحِیَ اِلَیۡنَاۤ اَنَّ الۡعَذَابَ عَلٰی مَنۡ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰی ﴿۴۸﴾ قَالَ فَمَنۡ رَّبُّكُمَا یٰمُوۡسٰی ﴿۴۹﴾ قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِیۡۤ اَعۡطٰی كُلَّ شَیۡءٍ خَلۡقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰی ﴿۵۰﴾

They said, "Our Lord, we are afraid he will hasten to commit excess against us, or will cross all bounds." [45]

He said, "Do not be afraid. I am surely with you both. I hear and I see. [46] **So, come to him and say, 'We are the messengers of your Lord. So, let the children of Isrā'īl go with us, and do not torment them. We have come to you with a sign from your Lord. And peace be upon the one who follows the guidance.** [47] **Verily, it has been revealed to us that the punishment is for the one who denies and turns away.'"** [48]

He (the Pharaoh) said, "Who then is the Lord of you two, O Mūsā?" [49] **He (Mūsā) said, "Our Lord is He who gave everything its shape, then guidance."** [50]

Commentary

Why was Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام afraid?

The words اِنَّنَا نَخَافُ (We are afraid) signifies that here Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام expressed twofold fear before Allah. The first fear is pointed out by the word اَنْ يَّفْرُطَ which means to cross all boundaries. So the meaning of the sentence is 'perhaps the Pharaoh would attack even before listening to us'. The other fear is mentioned with the words اَنْ يَّطْغٰى - which means that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was apprehensive that the Pharaoh might, after listening to his demands, become so refractory and perverse that he might speak about Allah in disrespectful terms.

It will be recalled that when prophethood was bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام , he had prayed to Allah to depute Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام also to assist him in his mission, and Allah had accepted his prayer. At the same time Allah informed him سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِاَخِيْكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يَصِلُوْنَ اِلَيْكُمَا ("We make your arm stronger through (the help of) your

brother and will make for you the upper hand so they will not reach you (with any harm)" - 28:35) and that whatever else he asked for was granted to him (قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يٰمُوسٰى)- "You have been granted your request O Mūsā" - 20:36. Among the things granted to him was شرح صدر (heart at peace) which means that he was made immune to fear. So, when he had received such firm assurances from Allah, how does one explain the fear expressed by him in this verse. One answer to this question is that the promise of victory and security from harm is rather vague in that victory may refer to success in debate with the Pharaoh and his men. It can also be argued that victory could come only if the Egyptians heard his arguments and reasonings, and saw his miracles but there was this possibility also that they might attack him before he had laid his arguments before them. Besides, شرح صدر does not mean elimination of natural fear.

The second point is that fear of fearsome things is a natural instinct and even prophets are not free from it in spite of their complete faith in the promises of Allah. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام himself was afraid to pick up his staff when it turned into a snake therefore Allah re-assured him with the word لَاتَخَفْ (do not be afraid). On all such occasions Allah removed their fears by propitious tidings. Three other verses: فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَّتَرَقَّبُ (So, he went out of it (the city) in a state of fear, waiting (for what comes next) - 28:21) and فَاَصْبَحَ فِى الْمَدِيْنَةِ خَائِفًا (Then, next morning he was fearful, waiting [for what comes next] - 28:18) and فَاَوْجَسَ فِىْ نَفْسِهٖ خِيْفَةً مُّوْسٰى (So Mūsā concealed some fear in his heart - 20:67) can also be quoted expressing the same fear. It was this natural fear which persuaded the Holy Prophet ﷺ to migrate to Madīnah and some of his Companions to migrate first to Abbysinia and later to Madīnah. In the Battle of Aḥzāb the Muslims were so overawed by the strength of their enemies that they dug a trench as a protective measure even though Allah had promised them victory on numerous occasions. The truth is that while they did not have the least doubt about their ultimate victory, the fear which they felt was the result of a spontaneous human impulse in the face of danger, and the prophets being human are not immune to this impulse.

Allah said, اِنَّنِىْ مَعَكُمَآ اَسْمَعُ وَاَرٰى ("I am surely with you both. I hear and I see." - 20:46) Here the word "with you" is used in the sense of divine help and support which human senses cannot perceive.

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام called upon the Pharaoh to embrace the True Faith and also to deliver the Banī Isrā'īl from bondage

This shows that the prophets have the duty of guiding mankind towards their salvation as well as to liberate their people from worldly and economic bondages. Therefore, in this verse Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is reminded of both these duties.

God created everything; and everything is performing the functions assigned to it by Him

This point calls for some elucidation which is given in the following lines. The guidance which Allah gives to the prophets and which is in the nature of a duty imposed upon them is a special kind of guidance which is addressed only to human beings and Jinns who are gifted with intellect. There is also another kind of guidance known as guidance of Takwīn (creation) which every created thing possesses. Allah has given to fire, water, earth and air, and their compounds a special kind of feeling and perception which are not of the same nature as given to human beings and Jinns. This is the reason why the laws governing things which are permissible and those which are forbidden do not apply to them. Through this feeling and perception Allah has assigned duties to all created things and in obedience to this command of Takwīn and guidance, the earth, the sky and every other created thing is busy performing its allotted tasks. Air, water, fire and earth are all fulfilling the purpose for which they were created. They do not deviate from their destined course except by the command of Allah. And when He so commands the fire turns into a bed of flowers (as for Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام), and water acts as fire as for the people of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام (أُغْرِقُوا فَأُدْخِلُوا نَارًا - 71:25). Who has taught a newly born baby to draw milk from its mother's breast or to cry when hungry or in pain? It is this same Divine guidance which every created thing receives without any formal training.

In brief, every created thing has been programmed, by Allah, with a guidance of Takwīn (creation) which it is genetically bound to follow and deviating from the same is beyond its power. The other kind of guidance which is given to the human beings and to Jinns is not inherent in the nature and thus, is not compulsory but optional. It is this freedom of choice which renders them liable to reward for good deeds and to punishment for their sins. The verse أَعْطٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰى (who gave

everything its shape then guidance - 20:50) refers to the guidance of Takwīn (تکوینی ھدایت).

Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ reminded the Pharaoh, at the first place, of those acts of Allah Ta'ālā which are obviously done by Him alone and about which no one else could claim that he has performed them. The Pharaoh totally unable to refute this argument, and in his confusion asked Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ a question which was designed to entangle him into giving a reply that would greatly offend the Egyptians. The question was: how did the people of bygone ages stand who all worshipped idols, and what was their fate? The Pharaoh's purpose was that if Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ replied (as the Pharaoh surmised he would) that they were all misguided and deserving of Hell, then he could instigate his people against the latter. But the reply which Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ gave was so wise and discreet that the Pharaoh's evil design was completely frustrated.

Verses 51 - 59

قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُوْنِ الْاُوْلٰى ﴿٥١﴾ قَالَ عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّىْ فِىْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّىْ وَلَا يَنْسَى ﴿٥٢﴾ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَّسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا سُبُلًا وَّاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۭ فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖۤ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْ نَّبَاتٍ شَتّٰى ﴿٥٣﴾ كُلُوْا وَارْعَوْا اَنْعَامَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِى النُّهٰى ﴿٥٤﴾ مِنْهَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ وَفِيْهَا نُعِيْدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً اُخْرٰى ﴿٥٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرَيْنٰهُ اٰيٰتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَاَبٰى ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ اَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ اَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿٥٧﴾ فَلَنَاْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِّثْلِهٖ فَاجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّا نُخْلِفُهٗ نَحْنُ وَلَاۤ اَنْتَ مَكَانًا سُوًى ﴿٥٨﴾ قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ الزِّيْنَةِ وَاَنْ يُّحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى ﴿٥٩﴾

He said, "Then, what about the earlier generations?" [51]

He replied, "The knowledge about those is, in a book, with my Lord. My Lord does neither err nor forget. [52] **(He is) the One who made the earth a cradle for you and made for you therein pathways to move, and sent down water from the heavens and brought out, with it, pairs of different vegetations:** [53] **Eat, and graze your cattle. Surely, in that there are signs for the people of understanding."** [54]

From this (earth) We created you and in this we shall put you back and from this We shall raise you up once again. [55]

And We showed him (the Pharaoh) all Our signs, yet he belied and refused. [56] **Said he, "Have you come to us to drive us out of our land with your sorcery, O Mūsā?** [57] **We will, then, bring to you a similar sorcery. So, make, between you and us, an appointment not to be backed out, neither by us nor from you - at an even place."** [58]

He (Mūsā) said, "Your appointment is the festival day and that the people are assembled at forenoon." [59]

Commentary

Verse 51 tells us that the Pharaoh had asked the question regarding the end of earlier people. If Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had given a straightforward answer that they were misled and will go to Jahannam, then the Pharaoh would have got a chance to scorn that it was not just him whom Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was blaming but all their ancestors as well. Naturally such a situation would have created doubts in the minds of people. Therefore Sayyidna Musa عليه السلام gave such an answer which was full of wisdom and did not give any chance to the Pharaoh for misleading the people. He said (as mentioned in verse 52) that only Allah knows their end. He never makes a mistake nor does He forget things. The words "My Lord does neither err" mean that it is inconceivable that Allah wills one thing and something different should happen.

The word أَزْوَاجًا (pairs) used in verse 53 is used here in the sense of "Kinds" or "Species", and the word شَتّٰى is the plural of the word شَتِيتٌ which means "different" or "diverse". The verse means that Allah has created so many kinds of plants that they are beyond human reckoning and each of them contains special properties which make them invaluable to man for

his well-being. It is impossible for man to comprehend completely all the properties and uses of all the plants created by Allah Ta'ālā. For centuries scientists have been working to find out all about them and researches have revealed a great deal about their properties. However it is impossible to claim that whatever we know at present is the last word.

The next verse (54) says إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي النُّهَىٰ (Surely, in that there are signs for the people of understanding. (20:54). The word النُّهَىٰ is the plural of نُهْيَة (*nuhyah*) which is used in the same sense as عَقَل (*'aql:* Intelligence) because it enables wise and intelligent persons to avoid harmful acts.

The composition of every human being contains, together with the seed, the earth of the place when he will be buried

The words مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ (From this We created you) in verse 55 means that Allah created you from the earth. This verse is addressed to all mankind although it is known that man is created from seed and not from earth, except Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام who was created directly from earth. One possible explanation for this is that since Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام is the father of all mankind and was himself created from earth, therefore all his descendants have been similarly described. Others have said that the seed itself is made of earth therefore anything created from the seed is in fact created from the earth. According to Imam al-Qurṭubī رحمه الله تعالى the text of the Qur'ān clearly indicates that man is created from the earth.

By words مَكَانًا سُوًى (at an even place) in verse 58 the Pharaoh proposed that the contest between Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and his own magicians should be held at a place which should, as far as possible, be within easy access of the Egyptians, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and the Banī Isrā'īl. The latter readily accepted this proposal and fixed the day and the time for the contest by suggesting مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ الزِّينَةِ وَأَن يُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى (Your appointment is the festival day and that the people are assembled at forenoon - 20:59). يَوْمُ الزِّينَةِ has been explained differently by different authorities. Some say it was a special festival when the Egyptians, attired in beautiful dresses, gathered outside the towns, while others say that it was a Saturday (يَوْمُ السَّبْتِ), and according to some others it was the tenth day of Muḥarram (عَاشُوْرَا).

The great advantage in fixing for the contest

It was a wise move on the part of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ to fix festival day as the day of contest when all Egyptians, high and low, were expected to assemble at an appointed place. There was also a point in fixing early forenoon as the time for the contest because this is the time when people, having finished their daily chores, are free to engage in other things. Also daylight and visibility are at their best in the early forenoon and people, while dispersing after witnessing a momentous event, spread the news far and wide. Thus when, with Allah's help, Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ inflicted a crushing defeat on the Egyptian magicians, the story became known the same day to people living in far flung places.

Magic - its truth, forms and the rules governing it

For a detailed discussion on this subject reference may be made to the story of Hārūt and Mārūt in Sūrah Al-Baqarah at page 265 to 278 of Ma'ariful Qur'ān vol. I.

Verses 60 - 76

فَتَوَلّٰى فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهٗ ثُمَّ اَتٰى ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى وَيْلَكُمْ
لَاتَفْتَرُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا فَيُسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ ۚ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنِ افْتَرٰى
﴿٦١﴾ فَتَنَازَعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّجْوٰى ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذٰنِ
لَسٰحِرٰنِ يُرِيْدٰنِ اَنْ يُّخْرِجٰكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا
بِطَرِيْقَتِكُمُ الْمُثْلٰى ﴿٦٣﴾ فَاَجْمِعُوْا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ ائْتُوْا صَفًّا ۚ وَقَدْ
اَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنِ اسْتَعْلٰى ﴿٦٤﴾ قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسٰى اِمَّآ اَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَاِمَّآ اَنْ
نَّكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ مَنْ اَلْقٰى ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ بَلْ اَلْقُوْا ۚ فَاِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ
يُخَيَّلُ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ اَنَّهَا تَسْعٰى ﴿٦٦﴾ فَاَوْجَسَ فِيْ نَفْسِهٖ خِيْفَةً
مُّوْسٰى ﴿٦٧﴾ قُلْنَا لَاتَخَفْ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْاَعْلٰى ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاَلْقِ مَا فِيْ
يَمِيْنِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوْا ۗ اِنَّمَا صَنَعُوْا كَيْدُ سٰحِرٍ ۗ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ

السِّحْرُ حَيْثُ اَتٰى ﴿٦٩﴾ فَاُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ
هٰرُوْنَ وَ مُوْسٰى ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ اَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ
لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ۚ فَلَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ
خِلَافٍ وَّلَاُوصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِيْ جُذُوْعِ النَّخْلِ ۫ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ اَيُّنَآ اَشَدُّ عَذَابًا
وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿٧١﴾ قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلٰى مَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالَّذِيْ
فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَآ اَنْتَ قَاضٍ ؕ اِنَّمَا تَقْضِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٧٢﴾ ؕ
اِنَّآ اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَلَنَا خَطٰيٰنَا وَمَآ اَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿٧٣﴾ اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّاْتِ رَبَّهٗ مُجْرِمًا فَاِنَّ لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ
لَا يَمُوْتُ فِيْهَا وَلَا يَحْيٰى ﴿٧٤﴾ وَمَنْ يَّاْتِهٖ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجٰتُ الْعُلٰى ﴿٧٥﴾ ۙ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ وَذٰلِكَ جَزٰٓؤُا مَنْ تَزَكّٰى ﴿٧٦﴾ ع

So, the Pharaoh turned back, and put his plot together, then came. [60] **Mūsā said to them, "Pity on you, do not fabricate a lie against Allah, lest He uproots you with a punishment. And loser is he who fabricates a lie."** [61]

Then, they disputed among themselves in their matter and kept their talk secret. [62] **Said they, "Certainly, these two are sorcerers who wish to drive you out from your land and do away with your excellent way of life.** [63] **So, make your plot firm and come forth in one row. And successful today is he who stands high."** [64]

They said, "O Mūsā, either you throw, or shall we be the first to throw?" [65] **He said, "Rather, you throw." Then, suddenly their ropes and sticks seemed to him, due to their magic, as if they were running.** [66] **So, Mūsā concealed some fear in his heart.** [67] **We said, "Do not be scared. Certainly, you are to be the upper most.** [68] **And throw what is in your right hand, and it will devour what they have concocted. What they have concocted is but a sleight of a magician. And the magician does not**

succeed wherever he comes from."[69]

So, the magicians were led (by the truth) to fall in prostration. They said, "We have (now) believed in the Lord of Hārūn and Mūsā." [70] **He (the Pharaoh) said, "You have believed in him before I permit you. He is, in fact your chief who has taught you the magic. So I will certainly cut apart your hands and your legs from opposite sides and will crucify you on the trunks of palm-trees, and you shall know who of us is more severe in punishment, and more lasting."** [71]

They said, "We will never prefer you over the clear signs that have come to us and over Him who has created us. So, do whatever you are to do. You will do only for this worldly life. [72] **We have believed in our Lord, so that He forgives us from our sins and from the magic you had compelled us on. And Allah is the best and everlasting."** [73]

Surely whoever comes to his Lord as a sinner, for him there is Jahannam wherein he neither dies nor lives. [74] **And whoever comes to Him as a believer having done righteous deeds, for such people there are the highest ranks,** [75] **the eternal gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they shall live for ever. And that is the reward for one who has purified himself.** [76]

Commentary

The words 'فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ' (and put his plot together) in verse 60 indicate that the Pharaoh assembled his magicians and their tools. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ there were seventy two magicians but others have put their number at figures which vary from four hundred to nine hundred thousand. Their leader was a blind man whose name was Sham'ūn (شمعون).

Sayyidnā Mūsā's ﵇ prophetic address to the magicians

Before the start of the contest Sayyidnā Mūsā ﵇ addressed some words of friendly advice to the magicians to warn them of divine punishment if they persisted in denying God's miracles and other manifestations of His power. His actual words were:

وَيۡلَكُمۡ لَا تَفۡتَرُوۡا عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا فَيُسۡحِتَكُمۡ بِعَذَابٍ ۚ وَقَدۡ خَابَ مَنِ افۡتَرٰى

Pity on you, do not fabricate a lie against Allah, lest He uproots you with a punishment. And loser is he who fabricates a lie - 20:61.

It was hardly to be expected that the magicians who had entered the field with all the might of the Pharaoh-behind them would pay any heed to Sayyidnā Mūsā's ﷺ words of advice. However, the prophets and their followers possess a hidden power so that their plain and simple words penetrate the most unruly and perverse minds, and the address of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ caused discord and dissensions among the magicians, some of whom thought that these could not be the words of a magician but of a higher being and were therefore, against the contest. But others were adamant, فَتَنَازَعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ (then, they disputed among themselves in their matter - 20:62), وَاَسَرُّوا النَّجْوٰى (and kept their talk secret - 20:62). Ultimately their unanimous decision was to proceed with the contest because, in their opinion, Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ and Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ were both magicians who wished to drive away the Pharaoh and his men from Egypt by their magic and to eradicate their ideal way of life. This decision of theirs is mentioned in verse 63 in the following words:

اِنْ هٰذٰنِ لَسٰحِرٰنِ يُرِيْدٰنِ اَنْ يُّخْرِجٰكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيْقَتِكُمُ الْمُثْلٰى

Said they, "Certainly, these two are sorcerers who wish to drive you out from your land and do away with your excellent way of life. (20:63)

The word مُثْلٰى is the feminine of اَمْثَل which means "most excellent". The meaning is that the Egyptians believed that their religion which regarded the Pharaoh as god was the best and Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ and Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ wanted to destroy it and supplant their own religion in its place. The word طَرِيْقه (translated in the text as 'way of life') is also used to describe the chiefs and leading citizens and according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas ؓ and Sayyidnā 'Ali ؓ the word has been used here in this sense namely that these two men wished to finish off all their leaders and important citizens and it was therefore, the duty of the Egyptian magicians to unite and use their best endeavours to defeat the enemy فَاَجْمِعُوْا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ ائْتُوْا صَفًّا (So, make your plot firm and forth in one row - 20:64). Formation of troops in ranks in battle has an unsettling effect on the enemy, so the Egyptian magicians arranged themselves in ranks for

the contest.

The Egyptians were confident of their success and in a mood of complacency asked Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام whether he would like to make the first move or whether they should initiate the contest. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام invited them to start the contest (Rather, you throw - 20:66) and there were several reasons for this. In the first place the Egyptians showed courage when they invited Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to open the battle and this offer called for an equally generous and chivalrous response. Secondly by making the offer the Egyptians showed their confidence in the outcome of the contest and implied as if they had already won it. On his side Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, by his counter-offer, sought to convey to the Egyptians that he regarded the result of the game as a foregone conclusion in his own favour. And finally he wished to see the tricks of the Egyptians before he planned his own strategy. So, with these preliminaries over, the Egyptians cast their staffs and ropes on the ground and it appeared to the onlookers as if they had turned into snakes and were running about.

يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعٰى (Their ropes and sticks seemed to him, due to their magic, as if they were running - 20:66). The verse shows that the Egyptian magicians had cast a hypnotic spell on the onlookers to whom it appeared that the staffs and the ropes had turned into snakes and were running about on the ground, whereas in fact no such transformation had taken place.

فَأَوْجَسَ فِيْ نَفْسِهٖ خِيْفَةً مُّوْسٰى (So Mūsā concealed some fear in his heart - 20:67.). The sight of so many snakes crawling around evoked a sense of fear in Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام which he did not reveal to anyone. Even if this fear was for his own personal safety then it can be regarded as a natural human reaction to a dangerous situation and does not conflict with the mission of prophethood. It is clear, however, that the fear which he felt was not for his own life. His apprehension was that if the immense crowd, which had assembled to see the contest, sensed that the Egyptian magicians had the upper hand then the purpose of his mission would be frustrated. These doubts and fears were dispelled when in the next verse Allah assured him لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلٰى (do not be scared. Certainly , you are to be the upper most - 20:68).

وَاَلْقِ مَا فِیْ يَمِيْنِكَ (And throw what is in your right hand - 20:69). Allah commanded Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام by means of a revelation (وحی) to cast down what he held in his right hand, and when he threw down his staff it turned into a huge snake and ate up all the imaginary snakes which the Egyptian magicians had produced by their magic.

Conversion to Islam and bowing in prostration by the Pharaoh's magicians

The Egyptian magicians who were masters of their art realized at once that what they had just witnessed was not magic but a miracle brought about by a Supreme Power. Consequently they fell in prostration and declared openly their faith in Allah - the God of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام. According to some traditions these magicians did not raise their heads until they had seen a glimpse of heaven and hell. (رواه عبد بن حميد وابن ابی حاتم وابن المنذر عن عکرمه - روح)

قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ اَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ (He [the Pharaoh] said, "You have believed in him before I permit you" - 20:71). The Pharaoh, thus disgraced before a vast multitude, was furious and he stormed at the magicians how they dared accept the religion brought by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام without his prior permission. He suspected that they all were Sayyidnā Mūsā's عليه السلام pupils who taught them the magic and had accepted defeat in connivance with him.

فَلَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ (I will certainly cut apart your hands and your legs from opposite sides - 20:71). The Pharaoh thus threatened his magicians with dire punishment. He said he would cut off their hands and feet from opposite sides i.e. first the right hand, then the left foot. This apparently was the mode of inflicting punishment under the laws of the Pharaoh. وَلَاُوصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِیْ جُذُوْعِ النَّخْلِ (And will crucify you on the trunks of palm-trees - 20:71) He also said that after cutting off their hands and feet he would crucify them on the trunks of palm-trees where they would remain suspended until they died of starvation.

قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلٰی مَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالَّذِیْ فَطَرَنَا (They said, "We will never prefer you over the clear signs that have come to us, and over Him who created us." - 20:72). The magicians, however, stood firm and did not waver in the face of the Pharaoh's threats. They told him plainly that they would not give him, nor anything he said, preference over the clear proofs and the

miracles which Allah had shown to them. Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah ﷺ says that when the magicians prostrated themselves before Allah, He gave them a glimpse of the eminent places and the gifts which were to be their reward in Paradise. They confirmed their belief in the one God Who created the earth and the skies and rejected Pharaoh's claim to divinity. While neglecting the threats of the Pharaoh they further said: "So you do what you want and punish us in whatever manner you choose. And, "You can punish us as long as we live but when we die we will be out of your reach. On the other hand we are in the power of Allah both in this and after death, and His punishment is of greater concern to us".

وَمَآ اَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ (And the magic you had compelled us on - 20:73). The magicians now accused the Pharaoh of having forced them to practice magic else they would not have taken it up. Here a question may arise that the magicians came to the contest of their own free choice and had even negotiated before hand their reward if they were victorious. How, then, could they justify their accusation that the Pharaoh had forced them to practice magic? A possible answer can be that whereas the magicians, to begin with, were tempted by promises of generous rewards for taking part in the contest they soon realized that they stood no chance against miracles and wanted to withdraw from the contest. It was then that the Pharaoh forced them to take up the challenge of Mūsā ؑ. Another explanation is that under a law passed by the Pharaoh everybody was compelled to learn magic.

The propitious end of 'Āsiyah, the Pharaoh's wife

Qurṭubī has mentioned in his commentary that while the contest between vice and virtue was in progress, the Pharaoh's wife kept herself informed of the minute to minute developments and when she learned that Sayyidnā Mūsā ؑ had emerged victorious, she at once declared her adherence to the True Faith. When the Pharaoh was informed of his wife's defection, he ordered that a huge rock be thrown upon her. When 'Āsiyah saw the rock coming, she raised her eyes in supplication to Allah who took away her soul so that the rock fell on her lifeless body.

Revolutionary change in the lives of the magicians

اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّاْتِ رَبَّهٗ مُجْرِمًا ...... وَذٰلِكَ جَزٰٓؤُا مَنْ تَزَكّٰى

Surely whoever comes to his Lord as a sinner, for him there is

Jahannam .... And whoever comes to Him as a believer ... for such people there are the highest ranks.... (20:74-76)

These words which refer to the Islamic beliefs and the hereafter have been spoken by the magician who only recently became Muslims and who had not yet been instructed about the principles and the obligations of the new faith.

It was the result of their brief association with Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام that Allah, in an instant, revealed to them the mysteries of their new faith so that they gave scarce heed to Pharaoh's threats. Thus with the adoption of the religion of Allah they attained a state of sainthood which is given to others after long and assiduous exertions. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه and 'Ubaid Ibn 'Umair رضي الله عنه said it was a divine marvel that the magicians who started the day as infidels became saints before it ended. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 77 - 82

وَلَقَدْ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى ۙ اَنْ اَسْرِ بِعِبَادِىْ فَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيْقًا فِى
الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا ۙ لَّا تَخٰفُ دَرَكًا وَّلَا تَخْشٰى ﴿۷۷﴾ فَاَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ
بِجُنُوْدِهٖ فَغَشِيَهُمْ مِّنَ الْيَمِّ مَا غَشِيَهُمْ ﴿۷۸﴾ وَاَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهٗ
وَمَا هَدٰى ﴿۷۹﴾ يٰبَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ قَدْ اَنْجَيْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ عَدُوِّكُمْ
وَوٰعَدْنٰكُمْ جَانِبَ الطُّوْرِ الْاَيْمَنَ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوٰى
﴿۸۰﴾ كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَارَزَقْنٰكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيْهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ
غَضَبِىْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّحْلِلْ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِىْ فَقَدْ هَوٰى ﴿۸۱﴾ وَاِنِّىْ لَغَفَّارٌ
لِّمَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدٰى ﴿۸۲﴾

And We revealed to Mūsā saying, "Move out with my servants at night, then make for them a dry path in the sea (with the strike of your staff), neither fearing to be caught up nor being scared (of anything else)." [77]

Then the Pharaoh chased them with his troops. So covered they were, by that which covered them from

the sea. [78] **And the Pharaoh led his people astray and did not show them the right path.** [79]

O children of Isrā'īl, We delivered you from your enemy and appointed for you the right side of the mount Ṭūr (Sinai) and sent down for you the Mann and Salwā: [80] **Eat from the good things We have provided you with, and do not transgress in respect thereof, lest My wrath befalls upon you. And the one upon whom befalls My wrath certainly falls into destruction.** [81]

And surely I am the Most-Forgiving for him who repents and believes and acts righteously, then takes to the right path. [82]

Commentary

The decisive defeat which he suffered in the contest between the right and wrong and between miracle and magic broke the power of the Pharaoh, and the Banī Isrā'īle stood united under the leadership of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام . Allah now commanded Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to take his men out of Egypt. But this move was full of danger. First there was the risk of pursuit by the Pharaoh, and second the river, which they had no means of crossing, barred their flight. Allah dispelled both these fears from Sayyidnā Mūsā's عليه السلام mind and told him to strike his staff on the surface of the water, and dry passageways would appear in the bed of the river over which they could all escape, thus frustrating Pharaoh's pursuit. This story has been narrated earlier under Ḥadīth ul-Futūn in this very Surah.

When the time came, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام struck the surface of water with his staff and masses of water stood asunder revealing twelve dry paths, as mentioned in Surah Ash-Shu'arā' فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيْمِ (And each part became like a big mountain- 26:63). The walls of water which divided the passages were so formed that those going on one road could see and talk to those travelling on other roads, thus imparting to them all a sense of security.

The number of the Banī Isrā'īl who fled Egypt and the strength of the Pharaoh's army

According to Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام embarked on his journey towards the Red Sea with the Banī Isrā'īl soon after sunset.

Earlier they had announced that one of their festivals was approaching which they would celebrate outside the city, and on this excuse, as well as to allay the suspicions of the Egyptians, they borrowed some jewellery from the Copts promising to return it after the festival. At that time Banī Isrā'īl numbered six hundred and three thousand, while another version puts their number at six hundred and seventy thousand. These figures, which may be exaggerated, have been taken from Isrā'īlite traditions, but one thing appears certain, namely that they were divided into twelve very populous tribes. These large numbers were also a gift from Allah because the first arrivals in Egypt in the days of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام were just the twelve brothers. Now the twelve tribes of those twelve brothers which fled Egypt numbered well over six hundred thousand.

When the Pharaoh learned that the Banī Isrā'īl had taken flight, he assembled a large army of which the advance units consisted of seven hundred thousand horsemen and started off in pursuit. When the Banī Isrā'īl saw the river barring their way ahead and the Pharaoh hot on their heels, they cried out in despair. "Surely! We are caught". Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام consoled them with the words إِنَّ مَعِىَ رَبِّى سَيَهْدِينِ (With me is my Lord indeed. He will guide me - 26:62). Then by the command of Allah he struck his staff on the water and twelve dry passageways appeared on which the twelve tribes of Banī Isrā'īl crossed over to the other side in safety. The Pharaoh who saw all this was frightened but he urged his men on by declaring that the dry paths were formed because the river stopped flowing on account of the awe which it felt in his presence. Saying so, he spurred his horse into the river ordering his army to follow him. When they were all in the middle, Allah commanded the river to resume its flow and water covered them over. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

وَوٰعَدْنٰكُمْ جَانِبَ الطُّوْرِ الْأَيْمَنَ (And appointed for you the right side of the mount Ṭūr. (20:80)) After their deliverance from the threat of the Pharaoh, and when they were safe across the river, Allah made a promise to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and through him to the Banī Isrā'īl that they should move to the right side of the mount of Ṭūr so that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام might be given the Torah and so that they might witness him speak with Allah.

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوٰى (And sent down for you the Mann and Salwā. - 20:80) This incident occurred when, having crossed the river, they were

commanded to enter a sacred city, but they refused and as punishment they were confined to a valley which is known as the valley of Tīh (Sinai). They stayed there for forty years and in spite of the punishment which they were undergoing they continued to receive gifts from Allah, and the Mann and Salwā (a special kind of food) was one such gifts which was given to them for their sustenance.

Verses 83 - 89

وَمَآ اَعْجَلَكَ عَنْ قَوْمِكَ يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ هُمْ اُولَآءِ عَلٰٓى اَثَرِىْ
وَعَجِلْتُ اِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضٰى ﴿٨٤﴾ قَالَ فَاِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْ
بَعْدِكَ وَاَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِىُّ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَرَجَعَ مُوْسٰٓى اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ غَضْبَانَ
اَسِفًا ۚ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا ۗ اَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْعَهْدُ اَمْ اَرَدْتُّمْ اَنْ يَّحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَاَخْلَفْتُمْ مَّوْعِدِىْ
﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوْا مَآ اَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلْكِنَا وَلٰكِنَّا حُمِّلْنَآ اَوْزَارًا مِّنْ زِيْنَةِ
الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنٰهَا فَكَذٰلِكَ اَلْقَى السَّامِرِىُّ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَاَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا
جَسَدًا لَّهٗ خُوَارٌ فَقَالُوْا هٰذَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ وَاِلٰهُ مُوْسٰى ۬ فَنَسِىَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اَفَلَا
يَرَوْنَ اَلَّا يَرْجِعُ اِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا ۙ وَّلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا ﴿٨٩﴾

"And what has caused you to hurry before your people, O Mūsā?" [83] **He said, "Here they are just behind me, and I hurried towards You, O my Lord, so that You be pleased."** [84]

He said, "We have then put your people to test after you (left them) and Sāmirī has misguided them." [85]

So, Mūsā went back to his people in anger and sorrow. He said, "O my people, did your Lord not promise you a good promise? Did then the time become too long for you, or did you wish that wrath from your Lord befalls you, and hence you backed out from the promise made to me?" [86]

They said, "We did not back out, of our own volition, of

the promise made to you, but we were burdened with loads from the ornaments of the people; so we threw them and so did throw Sāmirī." [87] **Then he brought forth for them a calf, a body with a lowing sound. Then they said, "This is your god and the god of Mūsā, and he (Mūsā) erred."** [88]

Do they not then see that it does not respond to them with a word, nor does it have power to harm or benefit them? [89]

Commentary

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and the Banī Isrā'īl, having escaped the Pharaoh's wrath and having crossed the river in safety, proceeded on their journey. Soon they came upon a people who worshipped idols. They said to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, "These people have adopted the idols as their gods who are visible as well as tangible. Do give us also a god whom we can see and touch." Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام replied, إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُوْنَ إِنَّ هٰؤُلَآءِ مُتَبَّرٌ مَّاهُمْ فِيْهِ وَبٰطِلٌ مَّاكَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ("You are really an ignorant people. What these people are in, is sure to be destroyed; and false is what they are doing." - 78:139.)

It was then that Allah commanded Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to bring his people to the mount of Ṭūr where he would receive the Book Torah which would be a code and a policy document for all of them. However, he would have to prepare himself to receive the Torah by observing a fast for thirty days and thirty nights continuously. This period was later extended by a further ten days so that the total period of fasting was forty days and forty nights. Then Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام led his people towards the mount of Ṭūr, but in his eagerness to receive the Torah he hastened ahead so that he could complete his prayers and fasts for the prescribed period of thirty days as early as possible. He appointed Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام to be his deputy during his absence. The Banī Isrā'īl continued the journey at their leisurely pace while he pushed on hoping that they would join him in due course near the mount of Ṭūr. In the meanwhile Sāmirī, by his wiles, seduced them into adopting the calf as the object of their worship and thus divided them into three factions. This unfortunate development seriously impeded their progress towards the Ṭūr.

Allah questioned Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ about his haste and the wisdom behind the question

When Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ appeared before Divine Presence, Allah questioned him as to why he had hastened ahead of his people. The obvious purpose of the question was to inform Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ of the mischief into which his people had fallen while he himself, unaware of what had happened in his absence, was expecting their arrival at the Ṭūr (Ibn Kathīr). On the other hand, according to Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī, the question contained an implied rebuke to Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ on his haste which deprived his people of his supervision and enabled Sāmirī to mislead them. His position as a prophet made it incumbent on him to stay with his people and keep a watchful eye on them and their activities. The learned commentator has further observed that this question implied an indication that a leader should remain behind his people when travelling with them, as Allah Ta'ālā had ordered Lūṭ ﷺ to bring his people out of the city and to remain at their back وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ (follow them at the rear -15:65)

Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ, ignorant of Sāmirī's mischief, answered the question put to him by Allah that his haste was the result of his ardent desire to fulfill Allah's command without loss of time so as to deserve His greater favour, and that his people were close behind him and might arrive at any time. It was at that moment that Allah informed him of the evil that had befallen his people and the part played by Sāmirī in bringing it about.

Who was Sāmirī?

Some people have said that Sāmirī was an Egyptian Copt who lived next door to Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ and had accepted the True Faith. When Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ took the Banī Isrā'īl out of Egypt he also joined the exodus. Others have said that he was the chief of one of the clans of Banī Isrā'īl called Samira which is still well-known in Syria. According to Sayyidnā Sa'id Ibn Jubair ؓ he was a Persian from the Kirman province. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ says that he belonged to a nation of cow-worshippers who somehow reached Egypt and pretended to join the religion of Banī Isrā'īl whereas in actual fact he was an hypocrite (Qurṭubī). Another version is that he was a Hindu from India who worshipped cows, adopted the religion of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ truly, and later returned to his infidel faith, or had accepted the true faith in

hypocrisy. Sāmirī's name, as generally believed, was Mūsā Ibn Zafar. Ibn Jarīr has related from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that Sāmirī was born in the year when under the orders of the Pharaoh all male Isrā'īli children were to be killed. His mother, fearing the worst, put him in the hallow of a cave and covered its mouth. She would visit him from time to time and feed him as best as she could. On the other hand Allah appointed Jibra'īl عليه السلام to look after the child and provide him nourishment. Jibra'īl عليه السلام brought honey on one finger, butter on the second finger and milk on the third finger which he fed to the child. He lived in the cave until he grew to manhood and, as has already been narrated above, became an unbeliever, involved the Banī Isrā'īl in a great disaster and himself suffered a terrible fate as a punishment from Allah. A poet has made a reference to this story in the following two couplets:

اذا المرء لم يخلق سعيدا تحيّرت عقول مربّيه وخاب المؤمل

فموسى الذى ربّاه جبريل كافر وموسى الذى ربّاه فرعون مرسل

> If a person is not fortunate in his birth then the minds of those who bring him up are bewildered and those who attach high hopes on him are disillusioned. Lo! The Mūsā whom Jibra'īl brought up became an infidel and the Musa who was raised by the Pharaoh became the Prophet of Allah.

اَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا (Did your Lord not promise you a good promise? - 20:86) Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام returned to his people full of sorrow and anger. First of all he reminded them of the promise which Allah had made to them that He would give them a Book for their guidance by adhering to which they could achieve all their worldly and religious objectives. He said that it was for the purpose of receiving the Book that he had started out with them for the mount of Ṭūr.

اَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ (Did then the time become too long for you? - 20:86) Not much time had elapsed on Allah's promise and it is inconceivable that the Banī Isrā'īl could have forgotten it, or if they remembered it, there was no reason for them to despair of its fulfillment on account of delay, thus providing for themselves justification for the worship of the calf.

اَمْ اَرَدْتُّمْ اَنْ يَّحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ (Or did you wish that wrath from your Lord befalls you? - 20:86) But since neither of the two eventualities mentioned above could be contemplated, the only conclusion was that

they knowingly and of their own choice invited the wrath of Allah.

قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلْكِنَا (They said, "We did not back out of our own volition, of the promise made to you". - 20:87) The excuse which the Banī Isrā'īl offered for adopting the worship of the calf was that they did not do so of their own choice but merely followed Sāmirī's example.

وَلَٰكِنَّا حُمِّلْنَا أَوْزَارًا مِّن زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ (But we were burdened with loads from the ornaments of the people. - 20:87) The word أَوْزَار (*awzār*) is the plural of وِزْر (*wizr*) which means "burden". On the Day of Judgment everybody will carry his bundle of sins on his shoulders just as one carries a load; therefore the sin is also termed as '*wizr*' (load). The word زينة means ornament and قَوْم (the people) refers to the Egyptians from whom Banī Isrā'īl had borrowed the ornaments on the pretext of wearing them on their festival day, but which they did not return to their owners and carried with them on their flight from Egypt. These ornaments have been described as أَوْزَار in the sense of "sins" because these were borrowed articles and by not returning them to their lawful owners the Banī Isrā'īl had committed a sin. From the *ḥadīth ul-futun* which has been reproduced in detail in the earlier pages it would appear that Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام warned them about their guilt and directed them to throw all the ornaments in a pit. According to some other versions it was Sāmirī who told them that by holding on to something which did not belong to them they were committing a sin and advised them to throw all the ornaments in a pit, which they did.

When does the property of infidels become lawful for the Muslims?

The non-Muslims who live in a Muslim state and abide by its laws they are known as Dhimmīs ذِمّي. Such people as well as those infidels who have entered into a treaty with the Muslims remain in full control of their properties and it is not lawful for the Muslims to deprive them of any part of it. However, the properties of those infidels who are neither Dhimmīs nor have any treaty with the Muslims, and who are described by the jurists as كَافِرٌ حَرْبِي (an infidel belonging to enemy country) are lawful for the Muslims.

That being so why did Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام describe the ornaments

borrowed by the Banī Isrā'īl from the Egyptians as a burden, meaning sin, and ordered them to throw everything in a pit? One explanation, which a majority of commentators have given is that the properties of infidels of an enemy state carried the same status as that of spoils of war. The law governing the spoils of war before the promulgation of the Islamic code was that while the Muslims could forcibly dispossess the infidels of their properties, they were forbidden to use them for their personal benefits. All the spoils of war (مال غنيمت) thus acquired were collected and placed on a mound as offering where a fire from the sky – such as lightning - consumed them and this was a sign that Allah approved their war against the unbelievers. On the other hand if the fire did not consume offering (the spoils of war) it was considered that Allah did not approve their war so that the spoils were regarded as inauspicious and nobody ever approached them. Under the Islamic Shari'ah some of the old laws were relaxed and as a result Muslims were permitted to use the spoils of war for their own benefit. A Ḥadīth on this issue appears in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim. According to the laws, in force then, even if the ornaments borrowed by the Banī Isrā'īl from the Egyptians were considered as spoils of war, those could not have been allowed for the personal benefit of Banī Isrā'īl. That is why everything was thrown into the pit under the orders of Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام.

The research conducted by Imām Muḥammad رحمه الله تعالى on this issue from a Juristic point of view is given in his book سِيَر and its commentary by Sarakhsi. His conclusions are very weighty and closest to the truth, namely that the property of a *ḥarbī* (infidel belonging to an enemy country) cannot be treated as spoils of war in every case. In order to be so treated, and thereby become lawful for the Muslims, it must have been acquired by sword in the course of a proper religious war (*jihād*). On the other hand the property of a *ḥarbī* (a citizen of an enemy state) which has been acquired otherwise than in a religious war cannot be treated as spoils of war. Such properties are however termed as فَيْء (*fai'*) which can be used lawfully by the Muslims only with the consent of the owner. Taxes imposed by an Islamic state and paid by the infidels voluntarily fall in the definition of *fai'* and their use is permissible even though they have not been acquired in the course of a religious war.

The ornaments borrowed by the Banī Isrā'īl did not fall in either of

these two categories. They could not be described as *fai'* because they were borrowed from the Egyptians who did not transfer their ownership to Banī Isrā'īl, nor could they be considered as spoils of war because they were not taken in the course of a religious war. Thus according to the Islamic Sharī'ah the Banī Isrā'īl could not have lawfully used the ornaments for their personal benefit.

It is well-known that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to migrate to Madīnah, he had with him many valuables which the infidels of Arabia had entrusted to him for safe custody because they had full faith in his honesty and integrity and had, in recognition of these qualities, bestowed upon him the title of Amīn (اَمِیْن - honest). He was so solicitous about these deposits that he placed them in the hands of Sayyidnā 'Ali رضي الله عنه and specifically directed him to restore them to their rightful owners before migrating to Madīnah. This clearly shows that it is not lawful for Muslims to appropriate, for their personal use, the valuables belonging to non-Muslims.

The word فَقَذَفْنٰهَا - means, "we cast away the ornaments". According to the *ḥadīth-ul-futūn* (narrated earlier in detail) this was done under the orders of Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام while some other versions say that Sāmirī cajoled the Banī Isrā'īl into throwing the ornaments in the pit. It is quite possible that both these versions are true (as appears below).

فَكَذٰلِكَ اَلْقَى السَّامِرِیُّ (So did throw Sāmirī - 20:87) It appears from the *ḥadīth-ul-futūn* related by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه (reported in earlier pages) that after the Banī Isrā'īl had thrown away all the ornaments, Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام ordered a big fire to be lit in the pit which melted them and left them in one solid piece. The decision as to the disposal of this precious metal was deferred till the return of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام . After all this had happened Sāmirī approached Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام . He had something in his closed fists and sought permission to throw it in the pit. Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام thinking that he held some ornaments in his fists permitted him to cast them in the pit. Then Sāmirī said, "I will certainly throw it, but first I want you to pray to God that a wish which I have may be granted." Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام, unaware of the evil which he planned, prayed to Allah in his behalf, and Sāmirī opened his hands and threw what he held in the pit. It was not

ornaments but only dust from under the hoof marks of the horse of Jibra'il ﷺ which Sāmirī had collected after he observed that signs of life appeared in the dust under the hoof marks of the horse. Aided by Satan he now wished to put life into a calf by means of this dust. Nevertheless, whether it was the result of the miraculous property of the dust or whether it was a consequence of the prayer of Sayyidnā Hārūn ﷺ in behalf of Sāmirī, the molten lump of gold and silver assumed the form of a calf and started making bovine sounds. There are other traditions also which relate that it was Sāmirī himself who persuaded the Banī Isrā'īl to throw the ornaments in the pit after which he carved the molten metal in the shape of a calf which had no life. He then sprinkled on it the dust from the hoof marks of the mount of Sayyidnā Jibra'il ﷺ and it became a living calf. All these and similar stories which are based on Isrā'īlite traditions have been related by Qurṭubī in his commentary and by other writers as well. These traditions cannot be wholly relied upon, yet at the same time we do not possess sufficient ground to disprove them either.

فَاَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلاً جَسَدًا لَّهٗ خُوَارٌ (So he brought forth for them a calf, a body with a lowing sound. - 20:88) Some Commentators maintain that it was only a body without life and that the sound was produced by a special contrivance. But the majority of commentators believe that the calf in fact possessed signs of life.

فَقَالُوْا هٰذَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ وَاِلٰهُ مُوْسٰى فَنَسِىَ (Then they said, "This is your god and the god of Mūsā, and he erred." - 20:88) Having carved a calf which could also produce a sound, Sāmirī and his friends said to the Banī Isrā'īl", "Here is your god and the god of Mūsā. It seems Musa has forgotten, that is why he has gone elsewhere in search of god".

اَفَلاَ يَرَوْنَ اَلاَّ يَرْجِعُ اِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلاً ۙ وَّلاَ يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلاَ نَفْعًا (Do they not then see that it does not respond to them with a word, nor does it have power to harm or benefit them? - 20:89) The excuses put forward by the Banī Isrā'īl before Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ for the evil deeds end with the previous verse. In this verse Allah reminds them of their folly by pointing out to them that even if the calf had life and made bovine noises would that be sufficient reason to adopt it as the object of their worship? They were well aware that it could not answer their prayers nor had it the power to harm them or to benefit them.

Verses 90 - 94

وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هٰرُوْنُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهٖ ۚ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ
الرَّحْمٰنُ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِیْ وَاَطِيْعُوْٓا اَمْرِیْ ﴿۹۰﴾ قَالُوْا لَنْ نَّبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ
عٰكِفِيْنَ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ اِلَيْنَا مُوْسٰى ﴿۹۱﴾ قَالَ يٰهٰرُوْنُ مَا مَنَعَكَ اِذْ
رَاَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوْٓا ﴿۹۲﴾ اَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ ۭ اَفَعَصَيْتَ اَمْرِیْ ﴿۹۳﴾ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ
لَا تَاْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِیْ وَلَا بِرَاْسِیْ ۚ اِنِّیْ خَشِيْتُ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِیْٓ
اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِیْ ﴿۹۴﴾

And Hārūn had already said to them, "O my people, you have only been led astray with it, and your Lord is the Raḥmān (All-Merciful). So follow me and obey my command." [90] **They said, "We will never discontinue staying with it, until Mūsā returns to us."** [91] **He (Mūsā) said, "O Hārūn what did prevent you from following me when you saw them going astray?** [92] **Did you then disobey my command?"** [93] **He said, "O son of my mother, do not hold me by my beard, nor by my head. I feared that you would say, 'You have caused discord among the children of Isrā'īl and did not observe my advice."** [94]

Commentary

When the Banī Isrā'īl were smitten with the mischief of calf-worship Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام as the deputy of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام remonstrated with them but to no avail. They split into three factions. Those who remained loyal to Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام and refused to be misled by Sāmirī and who numbered, according to Qurṭubī, twelve thousand. The second faction adopted calf-worship with the reservation that if Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, on his return, forbade them they would give it up. The third faction consisted of zealots who believed that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام would approve of their action and would himself join them in calf-worship but even if he did not, they themselves would never give up their new faith. When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام returned to his people he rebuked them for the mischief they had caused (as related in the earlier

verses). Then he turned to Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام and in a rage seized him by his beard and the hair of his head. He asked him that when the unbelief (كفر) of the Banī Isrā'īl had become obvious, why he did not follow him to the Ṭūr mountain and why he disobeyed his orders.

مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ (What did prevent you from following me when you saw them going astray. - 20:92) One meaning of *ittibā'* (following) referred to in this verse is that when Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام discovered that the Banī Isrā'īl had strayed from the righteous path, and were beyond recall, he should have abandoned them and joined Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام at the Ṭūr mountain. The other meaning of the word 'follow', as adopted by some commentators is that when the Banī Isrā'īl had forsaken the True Faith, Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام should have fought them as Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام would have done had he been present there. In any case Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام blamed Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام that he should either have fought the Banī Isrā'īl or should have parted company with them and joined Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام at the Ṭūr mountain, and that his continuing to live with them was an unwise act. Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام addressed him as يَا ابْنَ أُمَّ (O my mother's son!) which implied a plea not to judge him too harshly. His excuse was that if he had fought the Banī Isrā'īl or abandoned them with his twelve thousand men, it would have caused discord and strife among them. He said that he had understood the parting advice of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ (Take my place among my people and keep things right - 7:142) to mean that he should maintain harmony among the people and prevent differences at all cost. Besides, he said, he had hoped that when he (Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام) would return, he would be able to handle the situation satisfactorily. A further excuse which he offered and which is reported elsewhere in the Qur'ān was إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضْعَفُونِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي (7:150) which means that the Banī Isrā'īl have taken me as weak because of the small number of my supporters and were about to kill me. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام did not press the matter any further with his brother. He then turned to Sāmirī and asked him to explain his conduct in this whole affair. Qur'ān does not indicate whether he accepted the excuses offered by Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام or whether he considered the latter's mistake as one of *ijtihād* (assessment) and dropped the matter.

Differences between two prophets when the opinions of both could be right

In this affair the considered opinion of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, by way of *ijtihād* was that in the situation as it took shape Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام should have totally dissociated himself from the Banī Isrā'īl by removing himself and his followers from their company, and that by continuing to stay with them he had compromised his position. On the other hand Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام felt, by way of *ijtihād*, that such an action would have caused a permanent split among the Banī Isrā'īl and divided them into factions, and since there was hope that they would see the error of their way when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام returned, he thought it wise to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards them. The purpose of both the prophets was a strict adherence to the commands of Allah and to ensure that the Banī Isrā'īl remained steadfast in the observance of the True Faith and in their belief in the Oneness of Allah. Where they differed, however, was the manner in which these objectives could be achieved whether to make a complete break with the dissidents or to bear with them in the hope that things would improve ultimately. Both these views have merit and it is not possible to pass a firm and final judgment on them. The differences among the jurists based on *ijtihād* are of a similar nature and those holding different opinions cannot be charged of having broken any religious laws. As regards Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام seizing his brother by the hairs, it only shows his anger and frustration with the situation which had developed during his absence, but on hearing his explanation, he prayed to Allah to forgive them both.

Verses 95 - 98

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يٰسَامِرِيُّ ﴿۹۵﴾ قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوْا بِهٖ
فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ اَثَرِ الرَّسُوْلِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذٰلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِيْ نَفْسِيْ
﴿۹۶﴾ قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَاِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ لَا مِسَاسَ ۪ وَاِنَّ
لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّنْ تُخْلَفَهٗ ۚ وَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اِلٰهِكَ الَّذِيْ ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا ؕ
لَنُحَرِّقَنَّهٗ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهٗ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا ﴿۹۷﴾ اِنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ لَآ

إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿٩٨﴾

He (Mūsā) said, "What then is your case, O Sāmirī?" [95] **He said, "I perceived something they perceived not. So I picked up a handful of dust from under the foot of the messenger (the angel). Then, I cast it. And thus my inner self tempted me."** [96]

He (Mūsā) said, "Then go away, for your fate in this life is to say: 'Do not touch me'. And, of course, you have another promise, never to be held back from you. And look at your god to which you stayed devoted. We will certainly burn it, then we will scatter it thoroughly in the sea. [97] **Your God is Allah other than whom there is no god. He encompasses everything with knowledge."** [98]

Commentary

بَصُرْتُ بِمَالَمْ يَبْصُرُوْا بِهٖ (I perceived something they perceived not - 20:96) The reference here is to Jibra'il ﷺ. There is a tradition that he was present on his horse at the river crossing when, the Banī Isrā'īl having crossed it safely to the other side, the Pharaoh and his army entered the river in pursuit of the fugitives. There is another tradition that after Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had crossed the river Sayyidnā Jibra'il ﷺ came to him riding a horse to invite him to go to the Ṭūr mountain. At that time Sāmirī alone, and no one else, saw him and the reason, according to a tradition of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ, was that he was nourished by Jibra'il when his mother had left him in the cave, and knew him well. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُوْلِ (So I picked up a handful of dust from under the foot of the messenger.- 20:96) The word رَسُوْل (messenger) refers to Jibra'īl ﷺ. The Satan planted the idea in the heart of Sāmirī that the earth under the hoofs of the mount of Jibra'īl ﷺ must somehow contain signs of life and he should pick up some of it - which he did. According to the tradition of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ

القی فی روعهٖ انّه' لا یلقیها علی شیئ فیقول کن کذا، الاّ کان

(The thought occurred to Sāmirī was that if he sprinkled this earth on something and uttered the words, "You become so and so", it will change its original form and become "so and so.")

It is also related by some exegetes that Sāmirī observed that grass sprouted unfailingly in the earth under the hoofs of the horse of Jibra'īl عليه السلام from which he deduced that it contained traces of life. (كذا فى الكمالين) The same explanation is adopted by Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī on the authority of Tabi'in and majority of commentators, and it includes comments on doubts expressed by some skeptics فجزاه الله خيرالجزاء . (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Later on he moulded the ornaments, which the Banī Isrā'īl had thrown in the pit, in the shape of a calf and sprinkled the earth on it. By a miracle of Allah it developed signs of life and could even make a sound. The detailed story of Sāmirī and his calf has been given in (*ḥadīth ul-futūn*) in earlier pages of this volume.

فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ أَنْ تَقُوْلَ لَا مِسَاسَ

For your fate in this life is to say: 'Do not touch me'.- 20:97

The punishment proposed by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام for Sāmirī in this world was that everyone should sever all contacts with him and not to come near him, and he too was commanded not to touch anyone. Thus he was condemned to spend the rest of his life away from all social contacts - like a wild animal. Whether this punishment was awarded to him by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام by means of a law which was binding on Sāmirī as well as on the Banī Isrā'īl, or whether Sāmirī was smitten by some peculiar affliction which deterred people from making any physical contact with him, is not known. Some traditions have it that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had laid a curse on Sāmirī so that if anyone touched him then both the parties came down with fever (Ma'ālim). Thus he spent all his life hiding from people and whenever he saw someone approaching him, he would call out لَا مِسَاسَ (Don't touch me). It is mentioned in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī on the authority of Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ that initially Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had intended to execute Sāmirī but Allah stopped him because Sāmirī was a very generous person and helped people who were in distress.

The word 'لَنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ' means "we will certainly burn it". Here the question arises: how could the calf which was carved from gold and silver be burnt, because these metals when subjected to extreme heat are melted but are not reduced to ashes. Several possibilities have been advanced. The first is that after signs of life appeared in it, the calf ceased to be a figure of gold

and silver and became an animal of flesh and blood in which case it could be slaughtered and burnt. The second explanation is that it could be filed with a rasp into very minute particles of dust (Ad- Dur al-Manthūr). A third explanation is that it could be burnt by means of some chemical device (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). There is yet a fourth explanation, namely that the calf could be burnt by some miracle (Bayān ul-Qur'ān).

Verses 99 - 114

كَذٰلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ ۚ وَقَدْ اٰتَيْنٰكَ مِنْ لَّدُنَّا
ذِكْرًا ﴿٩٩﴾ مَنْ اَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَاِنَّهٗ يَحْمِلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وِزْرًا ﴿١٠٠﴾
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَسَآءَ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ حِمْلًا ﴿١٠١﴾ يَّوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي
الصُّوْرِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ يَّتَخَافَتُوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ اِنْ
لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا عَشْرًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِذْ يَقُوْلُ اَمْثَلُهُمْ
طَرِيْقَةً اِنْ لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا يَوْمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَيَسْئَلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ
يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّيْ نَسْفًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ لَّا تَرٰى فِيْهَا
عِوَجًا وَّلَآ اَمْتًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهٗ ۚ وَ
خَشَعَتِ الْاَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ اِلَّا هَمْسًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا
تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ اِلَّا مَنْ اَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهٗ قَوْلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ يَعْلَمُ
مَا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيْطُوْنَ بِهٖ عِلْمًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَعَنَتِ
الْوُجُوْهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّوْمِ ؕ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَنْ
يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخٰفُ ظُلْمًا وَّلَا هَضْمًا
﴿١١٢﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَّصَرَّفْنَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيْدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَّقُوْنَ اَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١١٣﴾ فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ وَلَا
تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يُّقْضٰۤى اِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهٗ ؗ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ زِدْنِيْ

عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾

Thus We narrate to you certain events of what has passed, and We have given to you, from Ourself, a (book of) advice. [99] Whoever turns away from it shall certainly bear a heavy burden on the Doomsday, [100] all such people living under it forever. And how evil for them is that burden on the Doomsday! [101] The Day when the Horn (Ṣūr) will be blown and We shall gather them together that day, while turned blue, [102] whispering among themselves, "You did not remain (in graves) more than ten (days)". [103] We very well know what they say, when the best of them in his ways will say, "You did not remain more than a day." [104]

And they ask you about the mountains. So, you say, "My Lord will blow them up totally (as dust), [105] then will turn them into a levelled plain [106] in which you will see neither a curve nor a mound. [107]

That day they will follow the caller, having no crookedness. And the voices will turn low in awe for the Raḥmān (All-Merciful). So, you will hear not but whispering. [108]

That day no intercession will be of any use to anyone, except the one whom the Raḥmān (All-Merciful) has permitted and was pleased with his word. [109] He knows what is in front of them and what is behind them, and they do not encompass Him in (their) knowledge. [110]

And all faces will be humbled before the Ever-Alive, the All-Sustaining. And the loser is the one who bears (the burden of his) transgression. [111] And whoever does acts from righteous deeds, while he is a believer, shall fear neither injustice nor curtailment (of his rewards). [112]

And in this way We have sent it down to you, an Arabic Qur'ān, and have detailed therein some warnings repeatedly, so that they may be fearful or it may produce a lesson for them. [113] So High above all is Allah, the King, the True.

> **And do not hasten with (reciting) the Qur'an before its revelation to you is concluded, and say, "My Lord, improve me in knowledge."** [114]

Commentary

وَقَدْ اٰتَيْنٰكَ مِنْ لَّدُنَّا ذِكْرًا (And We have given to you, from Ourself, a (book of) advice. - 20:99) According to a majority of commentators the word ذِكْر (advice) in the present context means the Qur'an.

مَنْ اَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَاِنَّهٗ يَحْمِلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وِزْرًا (Whoever turns away from it shall certainly bear a heavy burden on the Doomsday - 20:100) Turning aside from the Qur'an can take different forms: not paying proper attention and respect when it is being recited; showing scant desire to learn to read it or to comprehend its meaning, or reading it incorrectly without regard to correct pronunciation etc.; reading it without full concentration; reading it not to win God's goodwill but to attain worldly rewards such as wealth and fame. Likewise not striving to comprehend the laws laid down by the Qur'an or, having understood them, not complying with them or acting in their defiance are extreme forms of disregard for the Qur'an. Any neglect of the rights and claims of the Qur'an is a great sin and the guilty person will bear it on his head on the Day of Judgment in the shape of a heavy load. It has been related in several traditions that the evil deeds and the sins which a person has committed in his life time will be placed on his head in the shape of a heavy burden on the Day of Resurrection.

يُنْفَخُ فِى الصُّوْرِ (The Day when the Horn [Sur] will be blown - 20:102) According to Sayyidna Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, a Bedouin asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about صُوْر (the Horn) to which he replied that it is something like a horn which will be blown, meaning thereby that when the angel will blow into it all those who had lain dead for centuries will return to life. Only Allah knows the true nature of the Ṣur (the Horn).

وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يُّقْضٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهٗ (And do not hasten with (reciting) the Qur'an before its revelation is concluded - 20: 114.) It has been stated in Ṣaḥiḥ Ḥadith on the authority of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ that in the early days of revelation when angel Jibra'il ﷺ brought a Qur'anic verse and recited it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the latter would try to repeat it after him, lest it escapes from his memory. He had, thus, to make a double effort, i.e. to listen to and understand the meaning of the Qur'anic verses

while they were being recited by Jibra'il ﷺ and also to repeat them in order to commit them to memory. In this verse as well as in the verse لَاتُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ occurring in Surah قِيَامَةُ (75:16) Allah lightened this burden from the Holy Prophet ﷺ by assuring him that he need not worry himself about memorizing the Qur'ānic verses which were revealed to him because He (Allah) would make it possible for him to remember them without any effort on his part. All that he was directed to do was that he should keep praying, رَبِّ زِدْنِيْ عِلْمًا (My Lord, improve me in knowledge). This comprehensive prayer includes a plea for memorizing that portion of the Qur'ān which had already been revealed to him and a desire for what remained of it and for the ability to understand its true meaning.

Verses 115 - 127

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَآ اِلٰٓى اٰدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهٗ عَزْمًا ﴿١١٥﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اَبٰى ﴿١١٦﴾ فَقُلْنَا يٰٓاٰدَمُ اِنَّ هٰذَا عَدُوٌّ لَّكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقٰى ﴿١١٧﴾ اِنَّ لَكَ اَلَّا تَجُوْعَ فِيْهَا وَلَا تَعْرٰى ﴿١١٨﴾ وَاَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَؤُا فِيْهَا وَلَا تَضْحٰى ﴿١١٩﴾ فَوَسْوَسَ اِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطٰنُ قَالَ يٰٓاٰدَمُ هَلْ اَدُلُّكَ عَلٰى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَ مُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلٰى ﴿١٢٠﴾ فَاَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْاٰتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفٰنِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَّرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ ز وَعَصٰٓى اٰدَمُ رَبَّهٗ فَغَوٰى ﴿١٢١﴾ ثُمَّ اجْتَبٰهُ رَبُّهٗ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدٰى ﴿١٢٢﴾ قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيْعًا ۢ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ج فَاِمَّا يَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنِّيْ هُدًى لا فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقٰى ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ اَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِيْ فَاِنَّ لَهٗ مَعِيْشَةً ضَنْكًا وَّنَحْشُرُهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ اَعْمٰى ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِيْٓ اَعْمٰى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ اَتَتْكَ اٰيٰتُنَا فَنَسِيْتَهَا ج وَكَذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسٰى ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ

مَنْ اَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَدُّ وَاَبْقٰى ﴿١٢٧﴾

And earlier We had given a directive to 'Ādam, then he forgot, and We did not find in him a firm resolve. [115]

And when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before 'Ādam". So, they prostrated, all but Iblīs who refused. [116] **So, We said "O 'Ādam, this is an enemy to you and to your wife. So let him not expel you from Paradise, lest you get into trouble.** [117] **Here you are privileged that you will not be hungry nor will you be unclad,** [118] **and you will not be thirsty, nor will you be exposed to sun."** [119]

Then the Satan instigated him. He said, "O 'Ādam, shall I guide you to the tree of eternity and to an empire that does not decay?" [120]

So, both of them ('Ādam and Eve) ate from it, and their parts of shame were exposed to them, and they started stitching on themselves some of the leaves of Paradise. And 'Ādam disobeyed his Lord, and erred. [121] **Thereafter his Lord chose him. So He accepted his repentance and gave (him) guidance.** [122] **He said, "(O 'Ādam and Eve) Go down from here, all of you, some of you enemies of some. Then, should some guidance come to you from Me, the one who follows My guidance shall not go astray, nor shall he be in trouble.** [123]**And whoever turns away from My message shall have a straitened life, and We shall raise him blind on the Day of Judgment."** [124] **He will say, "My Lord, why did you raise me blind while I was sighted?"** [125] **He will say, "Like this Our signs came to you and you had ignored them. And in the same way you will be ignored today."** [126]

And thus We recompense him who exceeds the limits and does not believe in the signs of his Lord. And certainly the punishment of the Hereafter is more severe and more lasting. [127]

Commentary

And now we come to the story of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام which has

been related earlier in Sūrah Al-Baqarah and Al-A'rāf and partly in Sūrah Ḥijr and Al-Kahf, and will also appear later in Sūrah Ṣād. The link of the story with the preceding verses has been variously explained by the commentators. The most obvious of these explanations is the one which refers to an earlier verse كَذٰلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ (Thus We narrate to you certain events of what has passed- 20:99) in which Allah informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the stories of the past prophets were revealed to him as evidence and confirmation of his own prophethood and in order that his own followers be warned against committing the sins for which the earlier generations were punished. The first, and in some ways, the most instructive story was that of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام in which there was a clear warning for the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Satan was an old enemy of mankind who by his flattery and show of sympathy tricked Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام into committing an error for which both he and his wife were expelled from Paradise and the clothes which they wore there were taken away from them. Later their prayer for forgiveness was accepted by Allah and Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was elevated to the status of prophethood.

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَآ إِلٰى اٰدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِىَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهٗ عَزْمًا (And earlier We had given a directive to 'Ādam, then he forgot, and We did not find in him a firm resolve. - 20:115) Here the word عَهِدْنَا has been used in the sense of اَمَرْنَا or وَصَّيْنَا (Al-Bahr ul-Muḥīṭ), and the meaning of the verse is that long before the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ Allah had assigned a particular tree and enjoined upon Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام to shun it and not to eat any yield from it, and that barring this tree and its yields he was free to use the fruits of all the trees and all the other gifts from Allah which were abundantly available in Paradise. And, as will follow, he was also warned that the Satan was his enemy against whose wiles he must at all times remain on his guard and that any lapse on his part would land him in serious trouble. But he forgot and was found wanting in resolution. Here two words have been used, namely نِسْيَان (*nisyān*) which means to forget or to be unmindful, the other word is عَزْم (*'azm*) which means to be resolute in the performance of some task. In order to fully comprehend the meanings of these two words it is well to bear in mind that Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was one of those prophets who were endowed by Allah with constancy and determination, and that prophets, by virtue of their status

are infallible.

The first word suggests that Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was overtaken by نِسْيَان (forgetting) and since forgetting something is beyond one's control and volition it does not constitute sin. There is a Ḥadīth which says رفع عن امّتی الخطأ والنسيان (My followers will not be held liable for mistakes and unmindfulness). Then there is the general pronouncement in the Qur'ān لَايُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا (Allah does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity - 2:286). At the same time it has to be remembered that there are ways and means which if adopted will prevent people from forgetting things. And since the prophets stand high in the favour of Allah a special responsibility rests upon them to adopt such ways and means to avoid even mistakes and refrain even from forgetting something, therefore, they may well be held liable for not using the means which were available to them in order to avoid forgetfulness. The well known Ṣūfī Junaid Al-Baghdadi رحمه الله تعالى has expressed this idea in the following words حَسَنات الابرار سيّئات المقرّبين (The good deeds of ordinary virtuous men are often regarded as sinful and evil when performed by those who stand high in Allah's favour).

The episode under reference occurred before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was granted prophethood and according to some Sunni Scholars sins committed in the prior period do not militate against the concept of the prophet's immunity from sin. Also it was a case of forgetfulness which cannot be considered as a sin, but in view of the high position of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام as a prophet of Allah this too was regarded as a lapse for which he was admonished and as a warning to him his lapse was described as عِصْيَان (Disobedience).

The second word is *'azm* (firm resolve) and the same verse says that Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was found wanting in *'azm*. As a matter of fact he was fully determined to comply with the commands of Allah but the intrigues of Satan weakened his resolve and unmindfulness made him lose his grip on it.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ (And when We said to angels - 20:116)Here is a brief mention of the command which, after the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام, Allah gave to all the angels including Iblīs (Satan) who at that time lived in the Paradise with them, to prostrate to him. All the angels obeyed

but Satan refused. In his haughtiness he claimed that he was made of fire while Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was made of clay, and fire being superior to clay, he could not be expected to prostrate to the latter. As a punishment for his arrogance and defiance of the command of Allah he was accursed and driven from Paradise while all the gates of Paradise were opened wide for Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' عليها السلام to enjoy the fruits of its gardens and all the blessings of Allah at their will. However, there was one particular tree which they were told to shun in all circumstances and never to partake of any of its produce. This story has been related in Sūrah Al-Baqarah and Al-A'rāf. Instead of repeating it here, Allah has mentioned his directives given to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام to comply with His commands to the fullest extent. Referring to the rebellious conduct of Satan He reminds Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that the former is his enemy and that both he himself and his wife should at all times be on their guard against his deceptions. But if they succumbed to his tricks and became heedless of the commands of Allah then they would be expelled from Paradise and face distress (فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقٰى). The word تَشْقٰى (*tashqā*) is derived from شقاوة (*shaqāwah*) which has two meanings namely distress or trouble in the Hereafter and distress in this world. Here the word has obviously been used in the second meaning because it cannot be used in its first meaning even for pious Muslims, leave alone the prophets. Commentators have explained this word in the sentence هو ان يأكل من كدّ يديه (He will have to earn his living by the labour of his hands). (Qurṭubī) In the present context the second meaning of the word appears more appropriate because in the following verse reference has been made to the four basic needs of human life, namely food, water, clothes and shelter which are freely available in Paradise without any effort and toil. This verse also contains a hint to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that if he ever was expelled from Paradise, He would forfeit all these gifts. It is worth noting that here only those gifts have been mentioned which are basic to human life, to the exclusion of the other major rewards and comforts which are available in Paradise and the intention is to warn Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that one wrong step would deprive him of all these benefits, which he would have to earn for himself with physical labour and by the sweat of his brow. Most commentators have adopted this very meaning of the word فَتَشْقٰى. (lest you get into trouble) Imām Qurṭubī رحمه الله تعالى has also recorded that when Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام came down to

the earth, Jibra'īl عليه السلام gave him some grains of wheat and rice and taught him how to plant the seeds, harvest the ripe crop, grind the grain and prepare bread from it. Finally when all the stages were completed and Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام sat down to eat, the bread slipped out of his hand and rolled down the hill. Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام went after it and retrieved it with great exertion. Thereupon Jibra'īl عليه السلام told Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that on the earth he and his descendants would have to work very hard in order to earn their livelihood. (Qurṭubī)

The responsibility for providing the essential needs of a wife rests on her husband

Early in this verse when Allah spoke to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام He included Sayyidah Ḥawwa' also in His address عَدُوٌّ لَّكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ (Satan is your enemy and the enemy of your wife. So you both must be very careful so let him not expel you from Paradise - 20:117). But towards the end of the verse word فَتَشْقٰى (lest you get into trouble) is used in the singular and not in dual form. From this Imām Qurṭubī has deduced the rule that a husband is responsible for meeting the essential needs of his wife and that any physical labour which is necessary to meet that responsibility must be provided by the husband alone. The use of the word فَتَشْقٰى in second person singular is a pointer to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that if they were sent to the earth the onus of earning a livelihood for himself and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' عليها السلام will fall on him alone.

Only four things fall within the definition of obligatory maintenance.

Qurṭubī says that this verse clearly indicates that there are four things only which a husband must provide for his wife namely food, water, clothes and shelter. Anything else which he gives her will be regarded as gift, but is not binding on him. From this it has also been deduced that wherever Islamic law makes a person responsible for the maintenance of somebody else (such as sick and needy parents whose maintenance is the responsibility of the children), it is obligatory on him to provide only these four things.

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرٰى (Here you are privileged that you will not be hungry nor will you be unclad, and you will not be thirsty, nor will you be exposed to sun - 118, 119.) Four things needed for the existence of life will

be provided in Paradise without asking or putting in any labour. One should not doubt that good taste of food will not be enjoyed because of the absence of hunger in Paradise. Similarly, it is incorrect to assume that one would not enjoy drinking cold water in Paradise because of lack of thirst. The reality is that hunger and thirst would not be felt in Paradise to the extent of feeling any difficulty. The food will be made available as and when one would desire, and the cold water will be provided immediately when one would like to drink. In fact everything will be provided the moment one would desire.

فَوَسْوَسَ اِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطٰنُ (الى قوله) وَعَصٰى اٰدَمُ رَبَّه‘ فَغَوٰى (Then the Satan instigated him... And 'Ādam disobeyed his Lord and erred - 120, 121.) Here it is pertinent to ask that when Allah had specifically told Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' عليها السلام to abstain from a particular tree or to eat any part of its yield, and had also warned them to beware of Satan's machinations who was their sworn enemy who would do his best to seduce them and thus cause their expulsion from Paradise, why then, despite all the warnings and admonitions, did Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام let himself fall into the trap laid out for him by the Satan. His action clearly constituted disobedience of the commands of Allah and were, therefore, acts of sin. There is consensus among scholars that the prophets of Allah are immune from all sins - minor or major, and Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was a prophet of Allah! So how may one explain his action of eating the fruit of the forbidden tree when Allah had warned him in such clear terms? An answer to all these questions will be found in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Baqarah which also explains the use of the words عصٰى (to disobey) and غوٰى (to err) in reference to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام . According to the divine Islamic law the action of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام did not constitute a sin but because he was a prophet of Allah and in His high favour therefore this minor lapse on his part has been described as عِصْيَان (disobedience) for which he was admonished by Allah. A further point here is that the word غوٰى has two meanings: One is "to be deprived" and the other is "to err", or "to go astray". Al-Qushairi and Al-Qurṭubī have adopted the first meaning of the word and have explained this verse by saying that as a punishment for his lapse Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was deprived of the comforts which were available to him in the Paradise and as a result his life became harsh and bitter.

It is incumbent on Muslims to show reverence to the prophets of Allah when referring to them

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn Al-'Arabi رحمه الله تعالٰى when discussing the word عَصٰى (disobeyed) etc. in reference to Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ in his book Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān has made an important observation which is reproduced below in his own words:

لایجوز لاحدنا الیوم ان یخبر بذلك عن ادم الاّ اذا ذکرناه فی اثناء قوله تعالٰی عنه اوقول نبیّه' فامّا ان یبتدئ ذلك من قبل نفسهٖ فلیس بجائز لنا فی اٰبائنا الادنین الینا المماثلین لنا فکیف فی ابینا الاقدم الاعظم الاکرم النّبی المقدّم الذی عذره اللّٰه سبحانه و تعالٰی وتاب علیه وغفرله (تفسیر قرطبی و ذکره فی البحر المحیط ایضاً)

Today it is not permissible for any of us to use the word عِصْيَان (disobedience) in relation to Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ except when it has been used with reference to this verse or to a Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When indeed it is not desirable to use this word in relation to our own not-too-distant ancestors, who were like us, how can it be permissible in relation to Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ who is the father of all mankind and more deserving of respect than our own ancestors? Besides he is a revered prophet of Allah whose excuse He accepted and forgave him for his lapse. For such a person the use of the word عصیان (disobedience) is totally forbidden.

The same views have been expressed by Qushairi Abū Naṣr.

The words اِهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيْعًا (123) mean "both of you go down together". This command can be in reference to Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ and the Satan in which case the meaning of the phrase بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ (some of you enemies of some - 123) is obvious, namely that the two of them will remain enemies in the world also. However if it is argued that the Satan had already been expelled from Paradise long before these events occurred, then it would be correct to assume that these words have been addressed to Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' علیها السلام meaning thereby that their children would cherish hostile feelings towards one another and mutual hostility among the children embitters the lives of the parents.

وَمَنْ اَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِىْ (And whoever turns away from My message - 20:124.) Here the word can refer both to the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet ﷺ as has been mentioned in other verses ذِكْرًا رَّسُوْلاً (65:10). In both cases the

meaning would be that if anyone fails in his duty to recite the Qur'ān or to comply with its commands, or if he fails to submit to the authority of the Holy Prophet ﷺ then as punishment he would be condemned to a harsh and rigorous life in this world and would be raised blind on the Day of Resurrection.

The truth about the life of infidels and evil-doers being harsh in this world

Here one may ask that a life of penury and destitution in this world is not for the infidels and wicked people only but it afflicts good and pious people also. Indeed the prophets of Allah علیہم السلام have to endure the greatest misfortunes and calamities in their worldly life. Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī and all other books of Ḥadīth contain a tradition in which, on the authority of Sa'd ؓ and others, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the severest trials and tribulations are suffered by the prophets and in the case of the pious people those who enjoy a higher rank in the hierarchy are the ones who will get a greater share of misfortunes. On the other hand the infidels and the evildoers enjoy a life of comfort and affluence. Therefore the words of the Qur'ān that such people would be condemned to a harsh and rigorous life can refer to the life in the Hereafter (آخرت) only, because experience shows that they have, in this world, all the comforts of life.

The answer to the question posed above is that the punishment which the evil-doers will suffer in this world refers to the chastisement which awaits them in the grave where their existence will be made miserable and beyond endurance. Their graves will be their abodes and will squeeze them so tight that their graves will crack. There is a tradition in Musnād al-Bazzār on the authority of Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself stated that the words مَعِيْشَةً ضَنْكًا (straitened life) occurring in this verse (124) refer to the existence in the grave. (Maẓharī)

Another interpretation given to these words by Sayyidnā Sa'īd ibn Jubair ؓ is that these people will be deprived of the gift of contentment which will result in an overpowering greed for worldly goods (Maẓharī) but no amount of wealth will ever give them peace and content. The constant desire to augment their worldly possessions and the fear of any decrease in their size will always keep them anxious and uneasy. It

is generally observed that the wealthy people who have all the means of comfort at their disposal actually are unable to enjoy comfort themselves, because comfort cannot be achieved without content and peace of mind.

Verses 128 - 135

اَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُوْنِ يَمْشُوْنَ فِىْ مَسٰكِنِهِمْ ؕ
اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِى النُّهٰى ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ
رَّبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَّاَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ﴿١٢٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَ
سَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوْبِهَا ۚ وَمِنْ اٰنَآئِ
الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَاَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضٰى ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ
اِلٰى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهٖۤ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۙ لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيْهِ ؕ
وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿١٣١﴾ وَاْمُرْ اَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ
عَلَيْهَا ؕ لَا نَسْئَلُكَ رِزْقًا ؕ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ ؕ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَ
قَالُوْا لَوْلَا يَاْتِيْنَا بِاٰيَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ اَوَلَمْ تَاْتِهِمْ بَيِّنَةُ مَا فِى الصُّحُفِ
الْاُوْلٰى ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّآ اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَآ
اَرْسَلْتَ اِلَيْنَا رَسُوْلًا فَنَتَّبِعَ اٰيٰتِكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّذِلَّ وَ نَخْزٰى ﴿١٣٤﴾
قُلْ كُلٌّ مُّتَرَبِّصٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا ۚ فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَصْحٰبُ الصِّرَاطِ
السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى ﴿١٣٥﴾

Did it give them no guidance, as to how many generations We have destroyed before them who used to walk in their dwellings? Surely, in this there are signs for the people of understanding. [128] **And had there not been a word from your Lord that had come earlier, and an appointed time, it (the punishment) would have been inevitable.** [129]

So, (O messenger) endure what they say and proclaim the purity and praise of your Lord before the sun rises

and before it sets. And in some hours of night proclaim His purity, as well as at the edges of the day, so that you may be pleased. [130]

And never stretch your eyes towards what we have given to groups of them to enjoy, the glamor of the worldly life, so that We put them to test thereby. And the bounty of your Lord is better and lasting. [131]

And bid your family to perform Ṣalāh and adhere to it yourself. We ask no provision from you. We give provision to you. And the end is in favour of Taqwā. [132]

And they said, "Why does he not bring to us sign from his Lord?" Has there not come to them the manifestation of that which was contained in the earlier scriptures? [133] **And if We had destroyed them with a punishment before it, they would have said, "Our Lord, why did you not send a messenger to us, so that we might have followed Your signs before we were humiliated and put to disgrace?"** [134]

Say, "Everyone is waiting. So wait, then you will know who are the people of the straight path and who has guidance. [135]

Commentary

The word هُدٰى (guidance) implied in the first sentence of verse 128 can refer either to the Qur'ān or to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the meaning would be, "Did not the Qur'ān or the Holy Prophet ﷺ direct them i.e. the people of Makkah and tell them about the nations and the societies who were destroyed because they disobeyed the commands of Allah and turned away from the message brought to them by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and whose houses and lands are now occupied by them?" It is also possible that the word هُدٰى (guidance) may refer to God in which case the meaning would be "Did God not direct."

فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَايَقُوْلُوْنَ (So endure what they say - 20:130) The people of Makkah offered various excuses to justify their rejection of the religion brought to them by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and these included derogatory remarks against his person also, such as branding him as a sorcerer, a poet or even an untruthful person. The Qur'ān suggested here two

weapons to combat the torments aimed at him by the infidels of Makkah. One was to show patience and forbearance in the face of all provocation, and the other was to devote himself wholeheartedly to prayers, as the words وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ (and proclaim the purity of your Lord) suggest.

Patience and prayers are the only remedies against aggressive hostility

Everyone in this world, whether he is big or small, good or bad, has enemies and these enemies, however weak and feeble they may be, can do harm to their opponents. If they are not strong enough, they will not hesitate to stab them in the back, and failing everything else they will use abusive language which is equally hurtful. Therefore everybody has to be on his guard to protect himself from the hostile designs of his enemies. The Qur'ān has prescribed two very effective tools for use in such a situation. One is patience, forbearance and to eschew all thoughts of revenge, while the other is to occupy oneself in prayers and invocation of Allah. A person whose thoughts are full of revenge is often unable to exact it from his enemy despite his power and influence and is consumed with chagrin and frustration. On the other hand a person who devotes himself to prayers finds solace in the belief that nobody can harm him without the will of Allah and that whatever Allah wills has a hidden purpose behind it. This belief not only affords him satisfaction but also frees his mind from all thoughts of anger and revenge resulting from the hostile acts of his enemies. The words لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضٰى (So that you may be pleased) occurring at the end of the verse mean that "If you follow this advice, you will be able to lead a happy and contented life".

وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ (And proclaim the purity and praise of your Lord - 20:130) Here the direction of proclaiming Allah's purity is followed by the direction of proclaiming His praise. It implies an indication that when a person is given *taufiq* to remember Allah by performing *dhikr* or any other form of worship, it should not make him proud of it. Instead, he should praise Allah, because without His *taufiq* (facilitation) he could not perform that worship. Then, proclaiming the purity and praise of Allah may mean invocation of Allah and His praise, and they may also mean the prescribed prayers. The subsequent fixed times which have been mentioned obviously refer to prayer timings. Thus قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ (before the sunrise) means early morning (*fajr*) prayer قَبْلَ غُرُوْبِهَا (before it sets)

means midday prayers (*ẓuhr*) and afternoon prayers (*'aṣr*) while وَمِنْ اٰنَآئِ الَّيْلِ (and in some hours of night) means all prayers after sunset i.e. *maghrib, 'ishā'* and *tahajjud*. The words اَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ (the edges of the day) are intended to put additional emphasis on Fajr and Maghrib prayers.

Worldly wealth is a fleeting thing and is not an evidence of God's favour, and for good Muslims it is a danger signal

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ (And never stretch your eyes - 20:13) The words are addressed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and are intended to provide guidance to his followers. They are told not to cast covetous eyes at the splendor and glitter of those who revel in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, because all these things are fleeting and transient while the grace and blessings bestowed upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and through him upon his followers are everlasting and much more desirable than worldly luxuries.

People have always wondered at the wealth and prosperity of the infidels and evil doers despite their being loathsome and contemptible in the eyes of Allah, while pious and obedient Muslims spend their lives in poverty and destitution. Even the great and highly respected Sayyidnā 'Umar al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه was made aware of this glaring disparity one day when he entered the private quarter of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and saw him lying on a mat of rough reeds which left their marks on his body. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه stood there and wept. Then he said, "O Prophet of Allah! The kings of Persia and Byzantium live in comfort and luxury whereas you who are the chosen prophet of Allah and also his beloved live such a harsh life." To this the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "O son of Khattab! Has it not dawned upon you yet that Allah has given to these people everything that is dear to them in this world, but they will have no share of the good things in the Hereafter, only punishment and pain?" This is the reason why the Holy Prophet ﷺ chose for himself a life which was free from the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, even though he had the means of accumulating all the comforts and luxuries of life. Whenever he received share of wealth even without physical toil or exertion, he immediately distributed it among the poor and the needy and kept nothing of it for himself. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related, quoting Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khadri رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said,

ان اخوف ما اخاف عليكم ما يفتح الله لكم من زهرة الدّنيا (ابن كثير)

> What I fear most about you is wealth and worldly splendor which will be arrayed before you. (Ibn Kathīr)

In this Ḥadīth the Holy Prophet ﷺ has foretold the Muslims about their conquests and the acquisition of vast territories which will bring them untold wealth and means of luxury. But there is no cause to feel satisfaction at these prospects; on the other hand there is every reason to fear such an eventuality because an excess of indulgence in luxuries may make people forget their duty to Allah.

Requiring one's relatives and associates to offer their prayers regularly and the philosophy behind it

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا (And bid your family to perform *ṣalāh* and adhere to it yourself - 132) Here the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been asked to direct the members of his family to say prayers and that he himself should be very particular about his prayers. These appear to be two separate commands, i.e. one for the family and the other for himself but the fact is that for a person to be steadfast in saying prayers it is essential that his family and friends should be equally mindful of their duty in this matter. The word *ahl* used for the family is quite comprehensive and includes a person's wife, children and his associates because all of them influence the environment and are an integral part of society. After this verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ he used to go to the house of Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضی اللہ عنہا every morning at the time of morning prayers and call out الصّلوٰة الصّلوٰة (Come to *ṣalāh*, come to *ṣalāh*). (Qurṭubī)

It is reported that whenever Sayyidnā 'Urwah ibn Zubair ؓ saw a display of wealth, he would at once return home, call his family to prayer and recite to them this verse. Also when Sayyidnā 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ got up for his midnight (*tahajjud*) prayers, he would awake the other members of his family and recite to them this verse. (Qurṭubī)

Allah provides easy sustenance to a person who devotes himself to prayers and to His worship

لَانَسْئَلُكَ رِزْقًا (We ask no provision from you - 20:132) Allah does not demand of the people that they should provide sustenance to their families and dependants by their own power, because the responsibility for this is in His hands alone. Man is incapable of providing for himself,

and the best that he can do is to plough the land and plant seeds in it, but he has no power to germinate it or to make a tree grow out of it. The role of man in all this is to protect the tree after it has grown to maturity and then to put its yield to his personal use. And for the person who spends all his time in prayer Allah makes even this labour bearable for him (Tirmidhī). Ibn Mājah has quoted Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said,

يقول الله تعالى: يا ابن ادم: تفرّغ لعبادتى املأ صدرك غنى واسد فقرك، وان لم تفعل ملأت صدرك شغلا ولم اسد فقرك (ابن كثير)

"Allah says: 'O son of 'Ādam! You dedicate yourself to My worship and I will fill your chest with sufficiency and free you from want. But if you do not obey my commands, I will fill your chest with anxities and worries and will not free you from want.'" (Ibn Kathīr)

The meaning of the words لم اسد فقرك (I will not free you from want) is that such a man will always remain poor because the more wealth he acquires the more his greed will increase. And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ says that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying,

من جعل همومه همّا واحدا همّ المعاد، كفاه الله همّ دنياه، ومن تشعبت به الهموم فى احوال الدّنيا لم يبال الله فى أىّ اودية هلك "رواه ابن ماجه" (ابن كثير)

"A man who makes his concern for the Hereafter the focal point of all his efforts, Allah will take care of his concerns, but a person whose concerns are all about worldly affairs, Allah does not care in which valley he perishes."

اَوَلَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بَيِّنَةُ مَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُوْلٰى (Has there not come to them the manifestation of that which was contained in the earlier scriptures? - 20:133) It means that all the old Revealed Books such as the Torah, the Injīl (Evangel) and the scriptures given to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ bear a witness to the prophethood of the last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ . Is not all this sufficient evidence for those who persist in their denial of his prophethood?

فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَصْحٰبُ الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى (Then you will know who are people of the straight path and who has guidance - 20:135.) It means that though everybody is free to claim merit for his own ways and his own

actions, these claims are of no value, because the correct way is that only which finds favour with Allah, and on the Day of Resurrection everybody will be made aware as to who followed the path of error and who took the road to salvation.

اللّٰهُمَّ اهْدنا لما اختُلف فيهِ الى الحَقّ باذنكَ وَلا حَول
ولا قوّة الاّبك ولا مَلجأ ولا منجا منكَ الاّ اليْكَ

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Ṭā-Ḥā

Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'

(The Prophets)

Sūrah Al-Anbiya was revealed in Makkah and it has 112 Verses and 7 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 10

اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِىْ غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ مَايَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحْدَثٍ اِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوْهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ لَاهِيَةً قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۭ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّجْوَى ۖ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۖ هَلْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۚ اَفَتَاْتُوْنَ السِّحْرَ وَاَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ قٰلَ رَبِّىْ يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِى السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۡ وَهُوَالسَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ بَلْ قَالُوْٓا اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ ۢ بَلِ افْتَرٰىهُ بَلْ هُوَشَاعِرٌ ۚ فَلْيَاْتِنَا بِاٰيَةٍ كَمَآ اُرْسِلَ الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ مَآ اٰمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا ۚ اَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِىْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسْئَلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا جَعَلْنٰهُمْ جَسَدًا لَّايَاْكُلُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوْا خٰلِدِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ صَدَقْنٰهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُمْ وَمَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَاَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ كِتٰبًا فِيْهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ ۭ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾

The reckoning of the people has drawn near to them while they are in negligence, turning away (from its signs). [1] **No new message comes to them from their Lord, but they listen to it in a state of playing,** [2] **their**

hearts paying no heed. And the wrongdoers whisper in secret, "This one is nothing but a human like you. Would you then go along with the sorcery while you have eyes to see?" [3]

He (the prophet) said, "My Lord knows all that is spoken in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [4]

Further they said, "(The Qur'ān is) a mixture of hotch-potch dreams. Rather, he (the prophet) has fabricated it. Rather, he is a poet. So, let him bring a sign to us, as the earlier ones were sent with." [5] **Not a single town We destroyed did believe before them. So then, will they believe?** [6]

And We did not send before you messengers except men whom We inspired with revelation. So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the Message, if you do not know. [7] **And We did not make them as bodies that ate no food, nor were they immortal.** [8] **Then We made the promise come true for them, so We saved them and the ones We willed, and destroyed the transgressors.** [9]

Surely, We have sent down to you a book having a good name for you. So, do you not understand? [10]

Commentary

Importance of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'

Sayyidnā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ has said that four Sūrah viz Al-Kahf, Maryam, Ṭahā and Al-Anbiyā' are among the earlier revelations which I value a lot and keep them close to my heart. (Qurṭubī)

إِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ (The reckoning of the people has drawn near - 21:1) It means that the time is near when people will have to give an account of their deeds. Here, the reference is to the Day of Judgment, and its approach is in relation to bygone ages, as the *ummah* of Sayyidnā Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ is the last of them all. And if the meaning of the word حِسَاب (reckoning) is taken in its general sense then reckoning in the grave is also included, which each individual faces immediately after death. It is for this reason that an individual's death is regarded as his Day of Reckoning. من مات فقد قامت قيامته (for a person who has died his Day of Reckoning has arrived) so the latter explanation makes the verse very

clear in that the individual reckoning for every one is not very far, no matter how long one lives, because death is certain and no one knows when it will befall. The underlying message of this verse is to warn those people, whether believers or non-believers, who are in a state of slumber due to indulgence in worldly affairs, unmindful of the certainty that all this will come to an end one day. In fact it is this disregard of the Day of Judgment which is the root cause of all ills.

مَايَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحْدَثٍ اِلاَّ اسْتَمَعُوْهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ لاَهِيَةً قُلُوْبُهُمْ (No new message comes to them from their Lord, but they listen to it in a state of playing, their hearts paying no heed. 21:2,3) This verse describes the state of those who disregard the punishment in the grave and in the Hereafter and do not prepare themselves to counter it with good deeds. The verse further describes their practice of making light of new Qur'ānic verses when they are recited before them. They are totally oblivious of the fear of God and the Hereafter. The verse can be explained in two other ways. One, that they keep themselves engaged in their own amusement and take no notice of Qur'ānic verses when they are recited before them and two, that they redicule the Qur'ānic verses themselves.

اَفَتَأْتُوْنَ السِّحْرَ وَاَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُوْنَ (Would you then go along with sorcery while you have eyes to see? - 21:3) Those people used to discuss among themselves secretly that the claim of the Holy Prophet ﷺ about his prophethood should not be accepted, because he was an ordinary human being like all others and not an angel. On the other hand not even the most rigid among the unbelievers could deny the supreme charm and eloquence of the Book of Allah nor its power to influence people when it was recited before them. Therefore, in order to turn people away from the Holy Book they started calling it magic and black art. They thought that they could keep people away from Islam by labelling the Qur'ān as a book of magic thereby dissuading people from going to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and listening to Qur'ān. Probably they used to discuss this subject secretly among themselves lest the Muslims come to know about their foolish views and unveil their fallacy.

بَلْ قَالُوْآ اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلاَمٍ (Further they said, [The Qur'ān is] a mixture of hotch-potch dreams. - 21:5.) Dreams having an element of personal and satanic thoughts are called اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلاَمٍ . That is why this term (اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلاَمٍ) has been translated as "hotch-potch dreams". What it means is that in the

first place the unbelievers called the Qur'ān as magic, then they described it as a collection of disturbed dreams, and then they said it was a forgery and fabrication against Allah Ta'ālā to call it His words; and finally they said that he ﷺ was a poet and the Qur'ān represented his poetic compositions.

فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ (So let him bring to us a sign - 21:5) It means that the unbelievers demanded from the Holy Prophet ﷺ certain specific miracles to be shown as a proof of his being a real Prophet. In response to this demand, Allah Ta'ālā said in this verse that the same demand for miracles was also made by the people in the past from other prophets, and when their request was met, it was of no avail. They did not submit to Allah even after witnessing the miracles of their choice. And Allah has decreed that people who do not submit to Him even after they have seen the miracle of their choice are subjected to His wrath even in this world and are destroyed. Allah, in His Divine Mercy and in view of the honoured position of the Holy Prophet ﷺ had granted to his Ummah immunity from the terrible punishment which is the inevitable fate of those people who defy the Will of Allah. It was not, therefore, considered desirable to show them miracles of their choice because if they, like the earlier people, persisted in their unbelief even after seeing those miracles, they too would invite the wrath of Allah Ta'ālā. Then in أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ (Will they believe?) there is a hint that there was no likelihood of these people accepting the true faith even after seeing the miracles of their choice. Hence they were not shown the desired miracle.

فَسْئَلُوٓا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the message, if you do not know. - 21:7) In this verse, scholars of Injīl Evangele) and Torah are referred to as أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ (people of the message), who had accepted the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prophethood. Therefore, what it actually means is that if you are not aware whether the prophets of the past were angels or ordinary men then you should find out from the scholars of Injīl and Torah as they know perfectly well that all prophets were human beings. It is, therefore, quite possible that here the term أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ (people of the message) refers to all Jews and Christians (even though they have not believed in the Holy prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ).

Ruling: Qurṭubī has said in his exegesis that this verse has made it

clear that ignorant persons who are not acquainted with the rules of Sharī'ah must seek knowledge from scholars and then follow them accordingly.

The Holy Qur'ān is an honour and pride for the Arabs

كِتٰبًا فِيْهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ (a book having a good name for you - 21:10): The word كتابا(Book) is meant for Qur'ān and ذِكْر (name) is used here for honour, excellence and fame. Thus what is meant here is that the revelation of Qur'ān in Arabic language is a great honour and ever lasting fame for the Arabs and they should value it as such. History has proved that by Allah's Mercy and by the blessings of Qur'ān Arabs have dominated the world and ruled over it for a long time. This is also a fact of life that Arabs gained dominance over the world not because of any tribal or linguistic supremacy but because of Qur'ān. If there was no Qur'ān, probably no one would have known about the Arabs at all.

Verses 11 - 15

وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَّاَنْشَاْنَا بَعْدَهَا قَوْمًا اٰخَرِيْنَ
﴿۱۱﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَحَسُّوْا بَاْسَنَآ اِذَاهُمْ مِّنْهَا يَرْكُضُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ لَا تَرْكُضُوْا
وَارْجِعُوْٓا اِلٰى مَآ اُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيْهِ وَمَسٰكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْئَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ قَالُوْا
يٰوَيْلَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۴﴾ فَمَا زَالَتْ تِّلْكَ دَعْوٰىهُمْ حَتّٰى جَعَلْنٰهُمْ
حَصِيْدًا خٰمِدِيْنَ ﴿۱۵﴾

And how many a town We crushed, that were wrong-doing, and We raised up another people after them. [11] **So when they sensed Our punishment, all of a sudden, they started fleeing from it.** [12] **Do not flee, and go back to the luxuries you were involved in and to your homes. May be you are asked questions.** [13] **They said, "Woe to us! We were wrongdoers indeed."** [14] **Then, this continued to be their cry till We turned them into stubble, totally extinguished.** [15]

Commentary

These verses describe the destruction of those settlements which some

exegesists have taken as *Hadhūrā'* (حضوراء) and *Qilābah* (قلابه) of Yemen. Allah Ta'ālā had sent there a prophet about whose name there are different versions. Some say he was Mūsā Ibn Mīshā while others say his name was Shu'aib, in which case he was a different prophet from the one who lived in Madyan. This Prophet was killed by his people, who were, as a punishment annihilated by the infidel King Nabucad Nazzar.

This King was placed in authority over them just as he was used as an instrument for the punishment of Banī Isra'īl when they strayed from the righteous path in Palestine. In fact, Qur'ān has not identified any specific settlement. Hence it will be apt to leave the subject open, so that these settlements of Yemen may also come in its ambit. والله اعلم (Only Allah knows best).

Verses 16 - 29

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ لَوْ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نَّتَّخِذَ لَهْوًا لَّا تَّخَذْنٰهُ مِنْ لَّدُنَّآ ۖ اِنْ كُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهٗ فَاِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ ۚ وَ لَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهٗ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰلِهَةً مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ هُمْ يُنْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ لَوْ كَانَ فِيْهِمَآ اٰلِهَةٌ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ۚ فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً ۚ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ ۚ هٰذَا ذِكْرُ مَنْ مَّعِيَ وَذِكْرُ مَنْ قَبْلِيْ ۚ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا نُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ۚ بَلْ عِبَادٌ

مُّكْرَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُوْنَهٗ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِاَمْرِهٖ يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَابَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُوْنَ ۙ اِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضٰى وَهُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهٖ مُشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَنْ يَّقُلْ مِنْهُمْ اِنِّيْٓ اِلٰهٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْهِ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what lies between them for play. [16] **Had We intended to have a pastime, We would have had it from Our own, if We were to do so.** [17] **Instead, We launch the truth against the falsehood, which smashes it, and in no time it is nothing. And woe to you for what you relate.** [18]

And to Him belong all those in the heavens and the earth. And those who are near Him are not arrogant against His worship, nor are they sluggish. [19] **They proclaim His purity night and day, never slackening.** [20]

Or have they taken to gods from the earth who raise the dead? [21] **Had there been gods in them (the heavens and the earth) other than Allah, both would have fallen in disorder. So pure is Allah, the Lord of the Throne, from what they describe.** [22] **He is not questioned of what He does, and they are questioned.** [23]

Or have they taken to gods besides Him? Say, "Bring your proof." Here is the Message for those with me and the Message for those before me. Yet most of them do not know the truth and therefore they are averse. [24] **And We did not send before you any messenger but We revealed to him that there is no god but I, so worship Me."** [25]

And they said, "The Raḥmān (All-Merciful) has taken to Himself a son". Pure is He. They are but servants, honoured. [26] **They do not precede Him in speech and only under His command they act.** [27] **He knows what is in front of them and what is behind them, and they make recommendation for none but for whom He likes, and in awe of Him they are apprehensive.** [28] **And whoever of them says, "I am god besides Him", is the one**

whom We will recompense with Jahannam. This is how We recompense the transgressors. [29]

Commentary

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لٰعِبِيْنَ (And We did not create the heavens and the earth ... 21:16.) It means that we have not created the sky and the earth, and everything that lies in between them for mere amusement. In the preceding verses a reference has been made to the annihilation of certain settlements. In this verse there is a suggestion that just as the creation of the earth and the sky and all other created things was according to a set design, the destruction of the settlements was also the result of a definite purpose. Having witnessed the marvels and wonders of creation which are so abundantly spread all over, manifesting Allah's omnipotence and omniscience, do they still think that all these things are futile and without significance?

The word لَاعِبِيْنَ is taken from لَعِب (play), which means having no useful objective (Rāghib) while لَهْو (pastime) means an act which has no purpose at all except to provide amusement in free time. The disbelievers who argue against the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Holy Qur'ān and reject the Oneness of Allah and deny His Power, despite its abundant manifestations, then it is apparent that they have a notion that all this creation is meant for amusement and pastime. The verse rejects this false view and says that Allah's creation is not for fun and pastime. A little reflection will show that even the minutest particle of the universe has its utility and each and everything created by Allah has a purpose which speaks by itself for His omniscience and Oneness.

لَوْ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نَّتَّخِذَ لَهْوًا لَّا تَّخَذْنٰهُ مِنْ لَّدُنَّآ ۖ اِنْ كُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ (Had We intended to have a pastime, We would have had it from Our own, if We were to do so. - 21:17) It means that if We were to create something for amusement, there was no need to create the earth and the sky, and We could have done so from the things around Us.

In Arabic language the word لَوْ is used for imaginary and non-existent things. Here also it is used in the same sense i.e. those foolish people who regard all the wonderful things of the earth and the sky objects of fun and frolic do not realize that creation on such a gigantic scale cannot be undertaken for amusement. The suggestion here is that even a person of

ordinary common sense would not indulge in a project which has no serious purpose, to say nothing of Allah Ta'ālā who is Supreme and Exalted.

The commonly accepted meaning of لَهو is a purposeless pastime, and this meaning has been adopted in translating this verse. According to some commentators this word لَهو is also used sometimes for wife or children in which case the meaning of the verse would be a denial of the belief of the Jews and Christians, who thought that Sayyidnā 'Uzair and Sayyidnā Masīḥ عليهما السلام were God's sons. If Allah wished to have children why should they be from humans and not from other creatures around Him. (Allah knows best).

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ (Instead, We launch the truth against the falsehood, which smashes it, and in no time it is nothing. - 21:18) The literal meaning of قَذَف is to throw horizontally which has been translated above as launching) يَدْمَغ means to hit on the head (to smash it) and زَاهِق means something which is gone or vanishes without leaving a trace.

This verse explains that Allah has not created this marvelous universe with earth and the sky for amusement. This creation is the result of a carefully thought out plan which aims at distinguishing right from wrong. Observation of Nature's creations leads people along the righteous path and protects them from evil. This idea is conveyed in the verse by saying that virtue is hurled against evil and smashes its head so completely that it disappears without a trace.

وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُوْنَ (And those who are near Him are not arrogant against His worship, nor are they sluggish. - 21:19) It means that Allah's servants who are with Him i.e. angels pray to Him all the time without ceasing. So, if the humans do not pray to Him, it will not make any difference to Him, but they themselves will be the losers. It is human nature to judge others by applying one's own situation to them. Hence there are two possibilities preventing a person from offering acts of worship ceaselessly. One, that he regards it below his dignity to bow down before any one and therefore does not pray to Allah Ta'ālā. Secondly, it is physically not possible for a man to worship without a break because he needs to rest in between. In view of these two human constraints, it is

explained towards the end of the verse that the angels are free from these compulsions. They do not regard it below their dignity to worship Allah constantly nor do they get tired or need any rest or sleep. This point has been brought to a conclusion in the next verse by saying يُسَبِّحُوْنَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُوْنَ (They proclaim His purity night and day, never slackening - 21:20).

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Ḥārith ﷺ said that he asked Ka'b al-Aḥbār ﷺ how it was that angels kept reciting *tasbīḥ* (proclaiming Allah's purity) all the time. Did they not have anything else to do? And if they did how could they do both things simultaneously, that is reciting *tasbīḥ* and do other things. To this Ka'b replied "O my nephew! Does performance of any of your jobs prevent you from breathing?" The truth is that *tasbīḥ* comes to angels just as breathing comes to human beings which continues without stopping whatever else he may be doing. (Qurṭubī, Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰلِهَةً مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ هُمْ يُنْشِرُوْنَ (Or have they taken to gods from the earth who raise the dead? - 21:21) Here the ignorance of polytheists is described variously. Allah says how foolish and ignorant the polytheists are that they have made their gods from amongst the creatures of the earth who do not have the power of life and death. Only a Being which has these powers is worthy of being worshp لَوْ كَانَ فِيْهِمَآ اٰلِهَةٌ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ لَفَسَدَتَا (Had there been gods in them [the heavens and the earth] other than Allah, both would have fallen in disorder. - 21:22). This is an argument of common nature in favour of the Oneness of Allah which is based on common practice. It is also a logical proof of the oneness of God and a great deal of literature is available to explain it in the books on theology (عِلْمُ الْكَلَام). The argument of common nature is that if there were two Gods, each independent and sovereign, then the commands of both would prevail on the earth and in the sky which is not possible, becase it is inconceivable that both of them would have common views on all matters. And if there are differences of opinion which is inevitable where power is shared, there could be conflict, which would always lead to chaos and confusion. The suggestion that the two Gods could consult each other before passing orders has been adequately discussed, and rejected, in the books of theology. The thing to note is that if the two Gods had to take decisions jointly, then neither of them would have been sovereign, and a god with divided sovereignty is not God. The next verse viz: لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُوْنَ (He is not questioned

of what He does, and they are questioned) probably reinforces the argument that anyone who is answerable for his actions to someone else cannot be God.

هٰذَا ذِكْرُ مَنْ مَّعِىَ وَذِكْرُ مَنْ قَبْلِىْ (Here is the Message for those with me and the Message for those before me. - 21: 24) One explanation of this verse on which the translation is based is that ذِكْر means Message and "Message for those with me" refers to Qur'ān, while "the Message for those before me" refers to Torah, Injīl (Evangel) and Zabūr (Psalms), the earlier divine books. According to this interpretation, the meaning of the verse is that neither the Qur'ān (which is the Book for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his followers) nor the older books contain anything to suggest worship of anyone else but Allah. Despite the fact that the texts of Torah and Injīl (Evangel) have been altered, it is not suggested in either of them that Allah has partners with whom he shares His authority. Another explanation of the verse is given in Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ according to which the word ذِكْر (*dhikr*) means here "description", and the sense is that this Qur'ān is a description for the people who were in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which describes for them the rules of Sharī'ah and invites them to the correct way of life. At the same time it is a description of those who were before the Holy Prophet ﷺ because it keeps alive the stories and the traditions of people long gone by.

لَا يَسْبِقُوْنَهٗ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِاَمْرِهٖ يَعْمَلُوْنَ (They do not precede Him in speech and only under His command they act. 21:27) This verse refutes the claim of pagans of Makkah that angels were daughters of Allah. How can angels be Allah's children when they stand in such awe in His presence that they neither initiate any talk nor act against His commands. They simply await His words and act accordingly. This also points towards an important etiquette of behaving in the company of elders. That is, when a matter is brought forth in front of a group of people, the people before speaking themselves first, should wait until the elder among such a group has spoken. Speaking prior to the elder is contrary to the manners governing respect of elders.

Verses 30 - 33

اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنٰهُمَا ؕ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ حَيٍّ ؕ اَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِى

الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَبِهِمْ ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلاً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَآءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوْظًا ۚ وَّهُمْ عَنْ اٰيٰتِهَا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ فِىْ فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Have the disbelievers not seen that the heavens and the earth were closed, then We opened them? And We created from water every living thing. Would they yet not believe? [30] **And We created mountains on the earth, lest it should shake with them, and We have made therein paths and ways, so that they are guided.** [31]

And We made the sky a roof, protected; and they are averse to its signs. [32] **And He is the One who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each floating in an orbit.** [33]

Commentary

اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا (Have the disbelievers not seen. - 21:30) Here the word رُؤْيَتْ (to see, to think) is used in its general sense i.e. knowledge, whether acquired by visual observation or by way of logical conclusion. The discussion which follows refers partly to actual observation and partly to logical inference.

اَنَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنٰهُمَا (The heavens and the earth were closed, then We opened them. - 30) The word رَتْق (*ratq*) means to close and فَتْق (*fatq*) means to open. When used in combination the words mean full control in the management and execution of a job. The translation of the verse is that the earth and the sky were closed and Allah opened them up. Different exegesists have explained differently the sense of the words "closing" and "opening", but the meanings which the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the majority of the exegesists have adopted are that closing of sky and earth means shutting off rainfall from the sky and vegetation from the earth, and opening means the opening of these two

i.e. the rainfall and vegetation.

The following story about Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ has been related in Ibn Kathīr's commentary on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim. A man went to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ and requested him to explain the meaning of this verse to him. He pointed out towards Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and told him to go to him for an explanation of the verse. He also requested him to let him know the explanation that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ gave to him. The man went to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and asked him what do the words رَتْقًا (*ratqan*) and فَتَقْنَا (*fataqnā*) mean in the verse. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ replied that originally the sky was closed and there was no rainfall, likewise the earth was closed and there was no growth on it. When Allah Ta'ālā sent down man on earth to live here He opened up rainfall from the sky and the vegetation from the earth. After learning the explanation of the verse the man went back to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ and repeated to him what he had learnt from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Then Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ remarked that he was then left in no doubt that Allah Ta'ālā had graciously bestowed upon Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ a complete knowledge of Qur'ān. He further said that previously he used to consider Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās's ﷺ explanations of the Holy Qur'ān as bold attempts, of which he did not approve. But now he was convinced that Allah Ta'ālā had granted to him special insight into the meaning of Qur'ān, and that the explanation he gave of the words رَتْق و فَتْق was absolutely correct.

This story of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ is also reported in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī through Ibn Mundhir and Abū Nu'aim, and a group of the scholars of *ḥadīth* including Ḥākim, the writer of Mustadark, who has accepted the tradition as correct.

After reporting this narration Ibn Ibn 'Atiyyah al-'Aufi says that this interpretation is *ḥasan* and comprehensive, and is compatible with the text of the Qur'ān. It contains a lesson and argument against the infidels and also mentions about the Omnipotence and the special bounties of Allah Ta'ala, which is the basis of His Oneness and recognition of His attributes. The following sentence وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ (and We created

from water every living thing) also corroborates this interpretation. Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ has also adopted the same interpretation. Qurṭubī has declared this explanation to be that of 'Ikrimah as well and said that another verse also endorses this meaning.[1] وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ وَالْاَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ Ṭabari has also adopted this very interpretation.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ حَیٍّ (And We created from water every living thing. - 21:30) Water is an essential element in the creation of all living things. According to the latest research it is not only the humans and animals which possess both life and soul but also plants and minerals. Water plays a very important role in the creation, growth and evolution of all living things.

Ibn Kathīr has quoted Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ on the authority of Imām Aḥmad رحمه الله تعالى, that he requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to tell him how things were created. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that everything was created from water. Then Abū Hurairah ؓ asked about the acts that lead one to the Jannah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied:

> افش السّلام واطعم الطعام وصل الارحام وقم باللّيل والناس نيام ثمّ ادخل الجنّة بسلام (تفردبه احمد وهذا اسناد على شرط الشيخين الخ)
>
> "Make greeting with Salam common between you, and feed (others) and observe the rights of kinship, and stand (in prayers) at night when people are asleep. Then enter the Jannah with peace".

وَجَعَلْنَا فِی الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِیَ اَنْ تَمِیْدَبِهِمْ (And We created mountains on the earth, lest it should shake with them. 21:31) The word مَیْد (*mayd*) in Arabic language means to be convulsed. Therefore, the meaning of this verse is

1. The author has explained the interpretation of this verse as adopted by many authorities. But the miraculous style of the Holy Qur'ān is that the words used by it may have different possibilities for interpretation. The words *ratq* and *fatq* used here have another meaning which is 'being compact' and 'being separated'. If these words are taken in this sense, the verse may also be translated as, "The heavens and the earth were compact, then We separated them." In this case the verse will refer to an event of the early creation, meaning thereby that the heavens and the earth were originally a single body. Thereafter Allah separated the earth from the heavens. The contemporary research about the Big Bang is close to this description. But it should always be kept in mind that the Qur'ānic descriptions are independent of any scientific theory and the Qur'ān should not be made subject to ever-changing theories. **(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)**

that Allah Ta'ālā has planted mountains on the earth to hold it in place because any violent movement of the earth would be catastrophic to those who live on it.

كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ (Each floating in an orbit - 21:33) The word فلك(*falak*) is used for circle or anything round. For this reason the word فلك (*falak*) is also used sometimes for sky. In this verse it means the orbits of the sun and the moon in which they revolve. The Qur'ānic words do not specify the location of the orbits in the space but space research has now established that these orbits are located in the space much below the sky. This verse apparently indicates that the Sun also moves around an orbit. The scientists previously did not believe in the rotation of the Sun, but the most modern research has now accepted it.

Verses 34 - 47

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ ط اَفَائِنْ مِّتَّ فَهُمُ الْخٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ط وَنَبْلُوْكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ط وَاِلَيْنَا
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِذَا رَاٰكَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْنَكَ اِلَّا هُزُوًا ط
اَهٰذَا الَّذِيْ يَذْكُرُ اٰلِهَتَكُمْ ج وَهُمْ بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾
خُلِقَ الْاِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ ط سَاُورِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِيْ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنِ ﴿٣٧﴾
وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا حِيْنَ لَا يَكُفُّوْنَ عَنْ وُّجُوْهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَلَا عَنْ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ
وَلَاهُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ بَلْ تَاْتِيْهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ
رَدَّهَا وَلَاهُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ
بِالَّذِيْنَ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يَّكْلَؤُكُمْ
بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ ط بَلْ هُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾
اَمْ لَهُمْ اٰلِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِنَا ط لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ نَصْرَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَاهُمْ
مِّنَّا يُصْحَبُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ

الْعُمُرُ ۗ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا ۗ أَفَهُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أُنْذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ ۖ وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ الدُّعَآءَ إِذَا مَا يُنْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَلَئِنْ مَّسَّتْهُمْ نَفْحَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ يٰوَيْلَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِيْنَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا ۗ وَكَفٰى بِنَا حٰسِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾

And We did not assign immortality to any human (even) before you. So, if you die, will they then live for ever? [34] **Every one has to taste death. And We test you all through bad and good (situations) with a trial. And to Us you are to be returned.** [35]

And when disbelievers see you, they do nothing but make mockery of you (saying) "Is this the one who talks of your gods?" – while they themselves are the denier of even mentioning the Raḥmān (All-Merciful). [36]

Man is made of haste. I shall show you My signs, so do not seek haste from Me. [37] **And they say, "When will this promise be (fulfilled), if you are true?"** [38] **Only if the disbelievers were to know the time when they will not (be able to) keep off the fire from their faces or from their backs, nor will they be helped.** [39] **Rather, it will come upon them suddenly and will baffle them. So they will not be able to turn it back, nor will they be given respite.** [40]

And messengers have been mocked at before you. So those who laughed at them were besieged by what they have been mocking at. [41]

Say, "Who will guard you, during night and day, against the Raḥmān (All-Merciful)?" Rather, to the remembrance of their Lord they are averse. [42] **Or do they have gods who protect them besides Us? They are not able to help even themselves, nor are they allowed by Us to have company.** [43]

But We have given benefits to these and their fathers so much so that life prolonged against them. So do they not see that We are coming to the land reducing it from its sides? Then, are they the ones to prevail? [44]

Say, "I simply warn you by revelation, and the deaf do not listen to the call, when they are warned." [45] **And if they are touched by a whiff of the punishment of your Lord, they will certainly say, "Woe to us! We were wrongdoers indeed."** [46]

And We shall place scales to do justice on the Day of Judgment. So no one shall be wronged in any way. And even if it (any act, good or evil) is to the measure of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And We are enough to take account. [47]

Commentary

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ (And We did not assign immortality to any human (even) before you. - 21:34) The preceding verses give a strong and logical rebuttal of the unfounded and exaggerated beliefs of the infidels and polytheists to the effect that Sayyidnā Masīḥ and Sayyidnā 'Uzair علیهما السلام are the associates of God or that Masīḥ and the Angels are God's children. Unable to come up with a satisfactory answer to the rational and logical arguments given by the Qur'ān, the infidels of Makkah were in despair and wished for the death of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This has been mentioned in some other verses also, like e.g. نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهٖ رَيْبَ الْمَنُوْنِ (52:30). In this verse (34) Allah Ta'ālā has given two answers to their pitiable wish. One, that even if the Holy Prophet ﷺ died early how would it help them? If they thought that they could use the death of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as an argument against his prophethood, they were very much mistaken, because all the other Prophets whose prophethood they themselves had accepted, also died when their time came. Thus, if the death of their own prophets did not alter their position as prophets, how could the death of the Holy Prophet ﷺ change his position? Secondly, if their purpose in wishing for his early death was only to appease their frustration, then they should have known that death is universal, and everybody has to die sooner or later.

اگر بمرد عدو جائے شاد مانی نیست ☆ کہ زندگانئ مانیز جاودانی نیست

If an enemy dies, it is not to be rejoiced, because our own life is not eternal.

What is death?

Allah has said كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ 'Every soul has to taste death'. Here the word soul refers to the living things of the earth, who must all face death, but does not include the angels. There is a difference of opinion about whether the angels will also die or not on the Day of Judgment. Some say that every living thing will die, though momentarily, irrespective of whether they are of the earth or the skies. But others maintain that angels and *ḥūrs* and *ghilmān* of Paradise are excluded from this general rule. (Only God knows best) (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī) Majority of the scholars believe that death is the departure of soul from the mortal human frame, while soul itself is a subtle ethereal living thing which is made of light and resides in human body just as fragrance resides in the rose. Ibn al-Qayyim has convincingly proved this point in his book. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

The term ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ means that every individual will feel the pain of death - 21:35, because considering the manner in which body and soul are conjoined together their separation should obviously entail some pain. There are some saintly persons who regard death as a deliverance from the trials and tribulations of the worldly life and a means of bringing them closer to their Supreme love, that is Allah. This pleasure does not negate the agony of death, because where the reward is high, a little pain is easily tolerated.

Worldly comforts and discomforts are a test

وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً

And We test you all through bad and good (situations) with a trial. - 21:35

It means that man is tested both by good things and by bad things. شَرّ (bad) includes unpleasant things such as illness, grief, pain, poverty etc. while خَيْر (good) means desirable things, like good health, happiness, comfort and abundance. Man is subjected to these conditions in this world for test and the test is that he should show patience and endurance in the face of adversity and should offer thanks to Allah when his life is peaceful and comfortable. Wise men have said that, it is more difficult to be steadfast and consistent in offering thanks to Allah for His gifts than to persevere and show patience in difficult circumstances. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ is reported to have said:

بُلينا بالضّراء فصبرنا وبلينا بالسّراء فلم نصبر (روح المعانى)

"We were tested by discomforts and We bore it with patience,

but when we were tested by pleasures, we could not observe patience (i.e. we could not offer gratitude to Allah as was due)". (Ruh ul-Ma'ani)

Haste is undesirable

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ (Man is made of haste. - 21:37). عَجَل (*'ajal*) means haste or hurry. The word is used in situations when one desires things to happen before their time, and this trait is bad by its very nature. In another place also the word is used to denote human weakness. For instance وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا i.e. Man is prone to haste - 17:11, meaning that he is very impatient. When Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ went to the mount Ṭūr in a hurry leaving his people behind, he was censured by Allah Ta'ālā.

Prophets and the devout people who try to excel each other in the performance of righteous deeds have been commended and their zeal to do good deeds does not constitute haste and hurry because they do not try to do these deeds before their time. In fact they do the deeds on time, but try to excel each other in quantity and quality.

Here خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ (Man is made of haste - 21:37) means that haste and hurry is one of the many weaknesses which are inherent in human nature. When a man is identified by some intrinsic trait of his character, the Arabs used to say that he is 'made of' that trait. For instance a short tempered man would be called a 'man made of anger'.

سَأُورِيكُمْ آيَاتِي (I shall show you my signs - 21:37) Here the word آيات (signs) refers to those miracles and events which bear evidence to the honesty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the truth of his message. (Qurṭubī) These miracles also occurred during the battle of Badr (غزوه بدر) when the Muslims who were considered weak and worthy of contempt gained a great victory over their enemies.

Weighing of actions on the Day of Judgment and the scales to be used for this purpose

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ (And We shall place scales to do justice on the Day of Judgment - 21:47) The word مَوَازِين is plural of مِيزَان , which means a scale. In this verse the word is used plural which some exegesists have explained by saying that for measuring deeds and actions of people many scales will be used. Different balances may be used for different individuals, or different balances may be used for different types of deeds.

But majority of scholars agree that there will be only one balance to weigh all the deeds, and that the word has been used in plural because it will serve the purpose of many balances and measure the deeds of all the children of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام from the earliest time to the Day of Judgment, whose count only Allah knows. قسط (*Qisṭ*) means justice and fairness. Thus the meaning of the verse is that the balance will measure fairly and justly and no injustice will be done to any one. Mustadrak of Ḥākim has reported through Sayyidnā Salmān رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the balance that will be used on the Day of Judgment for weighing deeds and actions will be so enormous in size and span that it could enclose the earth and the sky within its fold for measurement. (Maẓharī)

Ḥafiẓ Abū al-Qasim Lalkai has narrated in his Sunan (سُنَن) through Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that an angel will be posted on the balance and every man will be brought before it. In case his good deeds overweigh his sins the angel will announce loudly, which everyone present will hear, that so and so has passed his test and now he will never be deprived of anything. And if the sins of a person overweigh his virtues, then the angel will announce that the wretched so and so has failed his test and has been made destitute for ever. Hafiz has also reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Hudhaifah رضي الله عنه , that the angel who will be posted on the balance on the Day of Judgment is none other but Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

Ḥākim, Baihaqi and 'Ājurrī have narrated through Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها that she enquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether he will remember his family members on the Day of Judgment; to which he replied that on that Day there will be three occasions when no one will remember any one. Firstly, when people will be brought before the scale of justice for the weighment of their deeds. Until it is known whether one's virtues overweigh the sins or otherwise, everyone would forget every one else. Secondly, when the records of deeds will be thrown in the air, until they are either placed in the right hand (which will be a sign of salvation) or in the left hand or from behind (which will be a sign of punishment) it would indicate God's wrath. Thirdly, the occasion to cross the bridge of Ṣirāṭ (صِراط) i.e. until this bridge is crossed, no one will remember any one else. (Maẓharī)

وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا (And even if it (any act, good or evil) is to the measure of a mustard seed, we will bring it forth - 21:47) It means that on the Day of Reckoning, all the deeds of every person, big or small, good or bad, will be brought forth so that they may be subjected to reckoning and weighment.

Method of the weighment of deeds

One possibility is that deeds and actions of a person recorded by angels will be weighed as indicated by the famous Ḥadīth generally known as حَدِيثُ الْبِطَاقَة (*ḥadīth al-biṭāqah*[1]). The other possibility is that deeds of a person will be converted into absolute substances which will then be weighed. By and large the traditions support the second view, and a majority of scholars have adopted this version. The verse وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا (And they will find what they did all there - 18:49) and the like in the Holy Qur'ān and many traditions also confirm the second view.

Accountability of Deeds

Tirmidhī has reported through Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها that a man came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and narrated to him that he had two slaves who called him a liar, were dishonest in their dealings and did not obey his orders. In retaliation he scolded them and also beat them. How, then would his chastisement of his slaves be judged in relation to their misconduct. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that their misdeed would be weighed against the punishment which he inflicted on them and if the two were equally balanced, then the matter would rest there, but in case their crimes exceed his punishment it would be regarded as a favour bestowed on them by him. But, on the other hand, if the punishment awarded to them exceeded their misdeeds, then he would be made subject to punishment and retaliation for his excess. Then the man rose and sat down in a corner and started weeping. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him whether he had not read this verse وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِيْنَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ (And We shall place scales to do justice on the day of judgment - 21:47). Then the man said that he had no choice but to free his slaves so that he might escape accountability. (Qurṭubī)

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1. The author has referred here to a long hadith in which it is mentioned that while reckoning a person's deeds, a card will be placed in the balance on which the *kalimah* لا اله الا الله will be written. This card will weigh more than a heap of bad deeds. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Verses 48 - 50

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَآءً وَّذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾

الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾

وَهٰذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبٰرَكٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ ؕ اَفَاَنْتُمْ لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾

And We gave Mūsā and Hārūn criterion and a light and an advice for the God-fearing, [48] **those who have awe of their Lord, though unseen, and are apprehensive of the Hour.** [49] **And this is a blessed advice We have sent down. Is it then you are rejecting it?** [50]

Commentary

الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَآءً وَّذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ (Criterion and light and an advice for the God-fearing - 21:48) The three attributes which belong to Torah are فُرْقَان (criterion) which differentiates between right and wrong second is ضِيَاء (light) which provides light and manifestation of truth to hearts, and the third is ذِكْر (advice) which is a source of guidance for the people. Some explain فُرْقَان as help from God which was available to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام at all times. It was manifest when he was raised in the Pharaoh's house, then at the time of his contest with the Egyptian magicians which resulted in the Pharaoh's discomfiture, and again when he was pursued by the Pharaoh and his army and Allah saved him by causing dry passageways to appear in the river and, after the Bani Isra'il had crossed over to the other side, by drowning the Pharaoh and his army. Even after this incident Allah's help was available to him at all times. Qurṭubī has pointed out that whereas ضِيَاء (light) and ذِكْر (advice) are the attributes of Torah, فُرْقَان (criterion) is something else and not an attribute of Torah, because of the use of the conjunctive letter *Wa'o* (و) after the word فُرْقَان (Allah knows best).

Verses 51 - 73

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ رُشْدَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهٖ عٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ

لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَاهٰذِهِ التَّمَاثِيْلُ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْتُمْ لَهَا عٰكِفُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا

وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا لَهَا عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمْ فِىْ
ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۵۴﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ اَمْ اَنْتَ مِنَ اللّٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾
قَالَ بَلْ رَّبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ الَّذِىْ فَطَرَهُنَّ ۖ وَاَنَا عَلٰى
ذٰلِكُمْ مِّنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾ وَتَاللّٰهِ لَاَكِيْدَنَّ اَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ اَنْ تُوَلُّوْا
مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذٰذًا اِلَّا كَبِيْرًا لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ اِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُوْنَ
﴿۵۸﴾ قَالُوْا مَنْ فَعَلَ هٰذَا بِاٰلِهَتِنَآ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۵۹﴾ قَالُوْا
سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَّذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهٗٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ﴿۶۰﴾ قَالُوْا فَاْتُوْا بِهٖ عَلٰٓى اَعْيُنِ
النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُوْنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ قَالُوْٓا ءَاَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هٰذَا بِاٰلِهَتِنَا
يٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ ﴿۶۲﴾ قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ ۖ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هٰذَا فَسْـَٔلُوْهُمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا
يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿۶۳﴾ فَرَجَعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّكُمْ اَنْتُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ
﴿۶۴﴾ ثُمَّ نُكِسُوْا عَلٰى رُءُوْسِهِمْ ۚ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ يَنْطِقُوْنَ
﴿۶۵﴾ قَالَ اَفَتَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَّلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ
﴿۶۶﴾ اُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۶۷﴾
قَالُوْا حَرِّقُوْهُ وَانْصُرُوْٓا اٰلِهَتَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿۶۸﴾ قُلْنَا يٰنَارُ كُوْنِىْ
بَرْدًا وَّ سَلٰمًا عَلٰٓى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿۶۹﴾ وَاَرَادُوْا بِهٖ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمُ
الْاَخْسَرِيْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَلُوْطًا اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الَّتِىْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا
لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ ؕ وَيَعْقُوْبَ نَافِلَةً ؕ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا
صٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ بِاَمْرِنَا وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ
الْخَيْرٰتِ وَاِقَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَاِيْتَآءَ الزَّكٰوةِ ۚ وَكَانُوْا لَنَا عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾

And earlier We had given Ibrāhīm his guidance, and We knew him well, [51] **when he said to his father and his people, "What are these statues you are devoted to?"** [52] **They said, "We found our fathers worshipping them,"**

[53] **He said, "Surely you and your fathers have been in open error."** [54] **They said, "Did you come to us with truth or are you of those who make fun?"** [55] **He said, "No, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, who has created them, and I am one of those who bear witness to it.** [56] **And I swear by Allah that I will do something to your idols after you are gone, turning your backs."** [57]

Then, he turned them into pieces, save the big one of them, so that they may come back to him. [58] **They said, "Who has done this to our gods? He is one of the wrongdoers, indeed".** [59] **Some of them said, "We have heard a youth speaking of them. He is called Ibrāhīm."** [60] **They said, "Then, bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may see".** [61] **They said, "Is it you O Ibrāhīm who has done this to our gods?"** [62] **He said, "Rather, this is done by this chief of theirs. So, ask them if they were to speak."** [63] **So they turned to themselves and said, "In fact, you are the wrongdoers."** [64] **Then, they reversed their position upside down (saying) "You already knew that they do not speak."** [65]

He said, "Do you then worship, beside Allah, what does neither benefit you in the least nor harm you? [66] **Fie upon you and upon what you worship other than Allah. Do you then not understand?"** [67] **They said, "(O people) burn him and help your gods, if you are to take action."** [68]

We said, "O fire, be cold and safe for Ibrāhīm." [69] **And they intended to harm him, but We made them the worst losers.** [70] **And We rescued him and Lūṭ towards the land we blessed for all the worlds.** [71] **And We blessed him with Isḥāq and Ya'qūb as gift, and each one of them We made righteous.** [72] **And We made them the *imāms* who guide (people) under Our command, and We inspired them to do good deeds and to establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*. And Us alone they worshipped.** [73]

Commentary

وَتَاللّٰهِ لَأَكِيْدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ (And I swear by Allah that I will do something to your idols - 21:57) The wording of the verse indicates that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام spoke these words before his community. But this

explanation leaves a little doubt in one's mind because Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had excused himself from going to the Eīd festival by pleading illness (اِنِّی سَقِیۡمٌ - I am sick - 37:89). And when they found their idols broken, they started a search for the culprit. If they already knew what he had said about their idols and that he had stayed behind alone when they had gone to attend the Eid function, then it was fairly obvious that he had broken the idols. Then where was the need for them to go looking for the offender? There are more than one explanations to this situation. One, that since Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was the only one holding these views and enjoyed no standing in the community, people might have ignored and even forgotten what he had said as something of no consequence. (Bayan ul-Qur'ān). Two, that those who were looking for the culprit were a different lot of people and were not aware of what he (Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام)had said about their idols. While in a third version Mujāhid and Qatādah are of the view that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did not speak these words before other people, but only pictured the situation in his mind, or had said that only at heart, or he might have spoken them before one or two old persons after the people had left for the festival. Later, when the idols were found broken and the people started looking for the one who did it, these old men revealed the secret to them. (Qurṭubī)

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذٰذًا (21:58) The word جُذٰذً is the plural for جذٌ which means fragment or piece. Thus its meaning is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام broke the idols into small pieces.

اِلَّا كَبِیۡرًا لَّهُمۡ (Save the big one of them - 21:58) That is, only the biggest idol was left intact and all the rest were broken. It is possible that the one which was left unbroken was either bigger in size or higher in esteem with the unbelievers.

لَعَلَّهُمۡ اِلَیۡهِ یَرۡجِعُوۡنَ (So that they may come back to him - 21:58) There can be three explanations to this expression. One, if the object of اِلَیۡهِ (to him) is Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام then the meaning would be that he himself wanted the unbelievers to ask him why he had broken the idols which would give him a chance to sneer at them that what they worshipped could not even look after themselves. The second meaning of اِلَیۡهِ یَرۡجِعُوۡنَ could be that he destroyed the idols in the hope that when the unbelievers saw them in pieces it might convince them of the futility of idol-worship and cause their return toward the religion of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام .

The third explanation is given by Kalbī. He says that the object of إِلَيْهِ is كَبِيْر (the big). In that case the explanation would be that when the unbelievers, on their return saw the idols in pieces except the big one, who had a hammer resting on his shoulder, they might turn towards it for an explanation and getting no response from it they would see for themselves the helplessness of the idol.

The words of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام were not untrue, but only allusions

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ ۖ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هٰذَا فَسْئَلُوْهُمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا يَنْطِقُوْنَ (He said, "Rather, this is done by this chief of theirs. So, ask them if they were to speak." - 21:63) When the community of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام got hold of him and asked him to confess his guilt, he said "The big one among them has done it. Why don't you ask him, if he can speak"?

The point to consider here is that the idols were broken by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and its denial and attributing the deed to the big idol, was contrary to fact and constituted an untruth. The exalted position of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام renders such a conclusion untenable. The exegesists have put forward several explanations to sort out this matter. One of them is that his statement is in the nature of an assumption i.e. why not consider the possibility that the deed was done by the big idol? And a supposition which is contrary to facts is not a lie as the Qur'ān itself says اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ فَاَنَا اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ (If the Raḥmān [All-Merciful] has a son then I am the first to serve him - 43:81). But the most convincing and straight forward explanation is the one adopted by al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Qurṭubī and Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī, which says that it is a metaphoric attribution (اسناد مجازى) , that is the act which was done by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was attributed to the big idol by way of metaphoric attribution because it was this idol which, by reason of the reverence that it commanded in the whole community, persuaded Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to do what he did with the smaller idols. It is like amputating a thief's hand and then telling him that none but his own misdeeds are responsible for the amputation.

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had also attributed the breaking of the idols to the big idol by placing an axe on its shoulder or in its hands, thus pointing an accusing finger towards it. He reinforced this suspicion by his word when he suggested to the unbelievers that they should enquire from the big idol as to who had destroyed the other idols. It is a case of

metaphoric attribution (اسناد مجازی) which is very well illustrated in an Arabic saying انبت الربیع البقلة , that is the spring rains have raised crops. Although in actual fact it is God who produces and nourishes the crops, yet it has been ascribed to a visible cause, and no one can call it a lie. In the same manner Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was not telling an untruth when he attributed the act to the big idol. His adoption of this act of dissimulation in fact served many religious interests; one of them being to make the people aware of the possibility that perhaps the big idol was infuriated with the smaller idols because they too were worshipped with the same degree of reverence as itself. If they could be made to think on these lines, it could have opened the route to belief in the Oneness of Allah. If the big idol was not willing to accept the idols as objects of worship how could Allah, the Creator of all living things, agree to share His authority with anyone?

Secondly, perhaps they also wondered that if the idols whom they worshipped were really as powerful as they thought them to be, how could anyone have broken them with impunity? Thirdly, if the charge of breaking the smaller idols could be laid against the big idol, then it would be quite pertinent to ask that in that event it should also have the power of speech. That is why Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said فَسْئَلُوْهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوْا يَنْطِقُوْنَ (So, ask them if they were to speak. - 21:63). Thus it is really not necessary to put far fetched meanings into his words which should be interpreted in a plain, straight forward manner. He attributed the deed to the big idol by way of metaphoric attribution. This was not contrary to facts nor did it constitute an untruth.

Three untruths ascribed to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

Now the point to consider is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself has said according to some authentic traditions that انّ ابراهیم علیه السلام لم یکذب غیر ثلاث (Bukhārī and Muslim). That is Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام never spoke an untruth except on three occasions, and then those three occasions have been described in the same *ḥadīth* in some detail. The saying goes on to narrate that two out of the three untruths were spoken solely in the way of Allah. One of them is this verse i.e. بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ كَبِيْرُهُمْ (Rather this is done by this chief - 21:63). The second one relates to Eid day when he said to his family إِنِّیْ سَقِيْمٌ (I am sick - 37:89), and the third one was spoken to save his wife, from harm. This happened when he was travelling with his wife

Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا, and passed through a settlement whose ruler was cruel and depraved and who used to seize the wives of other people and subject them to sexual abuse. However, he spared those who were accompanied by their fathers or brothers. When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام reached this city, the ruler was informed about the arrival of the couple. So he got Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا arrested and brought before him. When the ruler's men came to arrest her, they enquired from Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام about his relationship with her. Fearing the evil intentions of the wicked ruler Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام said that she was his sister. (It is this episode which is referred to in the *ḥadīth* as the third lie) Despite this declaration they took her away with them. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام had already briefed her that she should also tell the ruler that she was his sister, because according to Islamic relationship they were brother and sister as they were the only two Muslims in that land and hence according to Muslim brotherhood that relationship was valid. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام lacked the strength to defend himself and his wife against the ruler and his men, so he started praying to invoke Allah's Mercy. When Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا was brought before the ruler, he started making advances to her, and in punishment he was turned into a cripple. Then he begged her to pray for him to return to normal in which case he would let her go without harm. When Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا prayed for him and he returned to normal, he broke his promise and again tried to molest her and again became a cripple. This was repeated thrice and ultimately he gave up and sent back Sayyidah Sārah to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام . This is a summary of the *ḥadīth*. However, three lies have been ascribed to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام clearly in this *ḥadīth* which is against the position and dignity of the prophethood. But the *ḥadīth* contains in itself a refutation of this charge i.e. none of the three episodes reveal that a deliberate lie was told. They were mere dissimulations (توریہ) which are permissible and legitimate if spoken in defense of oneself from cruelty and do not fall within the definition of a lie. The reasoning for this is given in the *ḥadīth* itself i.e. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm علیہ السلام had told Sayyidah Sārah that he had informed the ruler's men that she was his sister and that she should also say the same, because they were indeed brother and sister in the wider sense of universal Muslim brotherhood. This is called *tauriyah* (dissembling) where the words used may be interpreted differently, so that the listener understands them one way whereas the

speaker means something else. *Tauriyah* is permissible by consensus of Islamic jurists if used to save oneself from injustice. This is totally different from Shiite's Taqqiyah (تَقِيَّه), which is an outright lie. In Taqqaiya one does not only speak a lie but also acts on it, while in the case of *tauriyah* it is not a lie in the real sense as the speaker uses words which are capable of conveying his intentions as in the case of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام calling Sayyidah Sārah as his sister which was true in the sense that both were Muslims and Islam constitutes a universal brotherhood. Same argument can be put forward in the case of his other two utterances. It has been explained above that he said بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ كَبِيْرُهُمْ as a *tauriyah* to refer the act toward the big idol by way of metaphor (اسناد مجازی). As for his saying, إِنِّیْ سَقِيْمٌ, in common parlance the word Saqeem (سَقِيْم) means sick but it also means depressed, dejected, despondent and weak. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said إِنِّیْ سَقِيْمٌ in the latter sense which was absolutely true keeping in considering his feelings against the unbelievers, but the people took it in the popular sense i.e. sickness. Then the wording of the *ḥadīth* that two out of the three lies were to promote belief in the One and true Allah suggests that they were not sins, because no one can hope to please Allah by committing an act of sin.

It is sheer ignorance to deny the authenticity of the lies of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

Some Muslims who are influenced by the writings of western orientalists and Mirza Qadyani have declared this saying as unauthentic despite the fact that its narrators are reliable persons, because it accuses Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام of lying which is against the spirit of Qur'ān, and that it is better to declare all the narrators of the saying as unreliable rather than to label Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام as a liar. From this they also made a rule that any saying, no matter how authentic its source might be, should be rejected if it is in conflict with the teachings of Qur'ān. This ruling is absolutely valid and acceptable to entire Ummah, but the point is that the religious scholars have spent all their lives in researching each and every *ḥadīth*, and none of those which they have accepted as authentic conflicts with the teachings of the Qur'ān. Such people lacking knowledge and being misguided do not hesitate to reject a *ḥadīth* and then justify the rejection by arguing that it is in conflict with the Qur'ān. In the present case the saying itself makes it clear that the words which

may be interpreted as lies is only *tauriyah*. As for the question why the words of *tauriyah* are called lies in the saying, the answer is that the slightest slip of those who are close to God is taken seriously, as can be seen in the previous Sūrah Ṭāhā when Sayyidnā 'Ādam's ﷺ slip and mistake is referred by the word عَصٰی (disobeyed - 21:121) and غَوٰی (got misled - 20:121). It can be seen that whereas small mistakes can be forgiven and set aside in the case of common people, the same slips are considered as serious offences when committed by those who are dear to Allah Ta'ālā. The Holy Qur'ān recounts at many places Allah's displeasure over prophets in such situations. The *ḥadīth* of *Shafā'ah* (intercession before Allah Ta'ālā) which is famous and well known says that on the Day of Resurrection all people will gather together and request prophets from Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ upto the last prophet who came before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ one by one for Shafā'ah (intercession) that they be judged quickly. Every prophet will excuse himself from Shafā'ah (intercession) recounting one or more of his slips or mistakes. At last the entire humanity will approach the last of the prophets Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ and he will perform *ashshafa'ah al-kubrā*. According to this saying Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ will excuse himself quoting these utterances which though said as *tauriyah* and were, therefore, not lies in actual fact, were, none the less, below the dignity of a prophet. This lapse has been described as a lie in the *ḥadīth*. This was well within the prerogative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and to the extent of narration of this saying we too may repeat it. But it is not permitted to anyone, except, when quoting the Qur'ān or this *ḥadīth*, to say that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ had told a lie. The same view has been taken by Qurṭubī and al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ in the commentary of Sūrah Ṭā-Hā in connection with Sayyidnā Ādam ﷺ.

Reference to a delicate hint regarding sincerity of action arising from the saying

Out of the three lies which have been attributed to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ in the saying two are said to be in the way of Allah Ta'ālā, but the third lie which was about Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا was not said to be in the way of Allah Ta'ālā, although saving the chastity of one's wife is very much a part of religious duty. On this point, in the commentary by Qurṭubī, a very delicate suggestion by Qazi Abu Bakr Ibn Al-'Arabi has

been reproduced which is apt to shatter the peace of mind of the pious and God fearing persons: in saving the chastity of one's wife, though an act of religious duty, there was also an element of personal interest in protecting his wife's honour. Because of the mixed motives this third incident has been excluded from the category of acts which are performed for Allah Ta'ālā, because Allah Ta'ālā has said أَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ (Look, to Allah alone belongs the pure faith - 39:3). Had some common man like us been involved in such an incident, then the act would have surely qualified as an act which are performed to win the goodwill of God. But in view of the exalted position of the prophets, the smallest degree of personal motive was regarded against the perfect quality of their devotion.

How the fire of Namrūd turned into pleasant garden for Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

Those who do not believe in miracles and supernatural events have given strange meaning to this episode. The philosophical assumption: that attributes which are attached with and complementary to something are not separable - is by itself fallacious. The fact is that nothing in this world is essential to or inseparable from something else. God gave to fire an attribute that it should burn and to water that it should cool, but these attributes are customary and habitual but not rationally necessary. No philosopher has so for been able to advance a convincing argument about these attributes being rational.

Thus these attributes being only habitual, they can be changed whenever God so wills. If God so wills, fire can act as a coolant and water as a burning agent, and it cannot be held as rationally impossible. This is what happens when Allah Ta'ālā reveals His miracles in support of the missions of His prophets. Thus He commanded the fire of Namrūd to cool down and the fire obeyed, and if the word بَرْدًا (cool) was not followed by the word سَلٰمًا (safe) the fire would have cooled like ice and would have caused him harm. The Qur'ān says about the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام when they were drowned in water that أُغْرِقُوْا فَاُدْخِلُوْا نَارًا (they were drowned, and admitted into a Fire - 71:25).

حَرِّقُوْهُ (Burn him - 21:68) that is the entire community and Namrūd decided to burn him in fire. The historic version is that for full one month the entire population of the city were busy collecting fire wood for this

purpose. Then after lighting the fire wood they fanned it to make it burn ferociously for the next seven days, until the flames rose high up into the sky. When the fire blazed with full ferocity they decided to throw Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام into it. But the fire was burning with such intensity that no one dared to approach it. Then the Satan gave them the idea to use a catapult to throw him into the fire. While people were preparing to throw Allah's Friend (خليل) into the sea of fire all the angels and all the creatures of the earth and sky cried out in unison at the fate that lay in store for Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. At that Allah Ta'ālā permitted them all to help Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. When the angels asked Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام whether he needed their help. He replied that Allah was enough to help him and that He was watching over him. Jibra'īl al-Ameen عليه السلام enquired whether he could render him any help to which Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام replied, "of course I need help, but from Allah, not from you". (Maẓharī)

قُلْنَا يٰنَارُ كُوْنِىْ بَرْدًا وَّسَلٰمًا عَلٰٓى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ (We said, "O fire, be cold and safe for Ibrāhīm." - 21:69) As stated above, one explanation of the fire becoming cool and comfortable for Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام could be that it ceased to be fire and changed into a pleasant breeze. However, the more plausible explanation is that the fire remained as fire but did not touch the body of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام , although it burnt other things around him, so much so that it even burnt down the rope which bound him.

According to some historic versions he remained in the fire for seven days and used to recall that those seven days were the most comfortable time of his entire life. (Maẓharī)

وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَلُوْطًا اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الَّتِىْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And We rescued him and Lūṭ towards the land We blessed for all the worlds. - 71

That is, We delivered Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليهما السلام from the land ('Irāq) where Namrūd ruled and sent them to the peaceful land of Syria where our bounties were in abundance, not only for the locals but for the people of the world. Syrian land abounds both inwards and outwards bounties of Allah Ta'ālā. Inward bounties in the sense that many prophets were born in this land, and outward bounty in the sense that it has a moderate climate and is full of natural beauty with greenery,

springs and streams all around and sustains a large variety of vegetation, fruits and flowers.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ نَافِلَةً (And We blessed him with Isḥāq and Ya'qūb as gift - 21:72) That is, Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed upon him the son Isḥāq عليه السلام as per his supplication and in addition to that a grandson Ya'qūb عليه السلام as a gift. This is why he is referred to as *nāfilah* which originally means 'extra'.

Verses 74 - 75

وَلُوْطًا اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا وَّنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِىْ كَانَتْ تَّعْمَلُ الْخَبٰٓئِثَ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾ وَاَدْخَلْنٰهُ فِىْ رَحْمَتِنَا ط اِنَّهٗ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾

As for Lūṭ, We gave him wisdom and knowledge and We delivered him from the town that used to do dirty deeds. Indeed, they were the people of evil, the sinners. [74] **And We admitted him to Our mercy. Indeed, He was of the righteous.** [75]

Commentary

The name of the city from which Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام was saved and which has been mentioned in these verses was Sodom. There were seven other townships under this city which were thrown upside down by Jibra'īl عليه السلام except one which was left intact for Lūṭ عليه السلام and his followers. (Ibn 'Abbās, Qurṭubī)

(تَعْمَلُ الْخَبٰٓئِثَ 21:74) خَبَائِث (Khabā'ith) is the plural of خَبِيْثَه meaning wickedness. Too many wicked things collectively are called Khabā'ith (خبائث). Their most abominable practice in which even the animals do not indulge, was sodomy or homosexuality. It is possible that because of its extreme wicked nature this practice is referred to as خَبَائِث that is in plural instead of خَبِيْثَه in singular, as some commentators have explained. The second explanation is that the people of Sodom also indulged in other bad habits such as drinking, singing, shaving off beard, growing moustaches, wearing silk clothes, stone throwing, whistling etc. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

Verses 76 - 77

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَأَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَنَصَرْنٰهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَأَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

And (remember) Nūḥ, when he called (for help) earlier, so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the terrible agony, [76] **and helped him against the people who belied Our verses. Indeed, they were the people of evil, therefore, We drowned them all.** [77]

Commentary

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ

And (remember) Nūḥ, when he called (for help) earlier - 21:76

Here مِنْ قَبْلُ (earlier) means before the time of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليهما السلام , whose account has just preceded in previous verses. As for the prayer of Nūḥ عليه السلام, which is referred to here briefly, the version given in Sūrah Nūḥ is that Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام had cursed his people, رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ دَيَّارًا (My Lord, leave not upon the earth of the unbelievers even one - 71:26). It is reported at another place that when the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام did not listen to him at all, he prayed to Allah Ta'ālā أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ (I am vanquished; do Thou succour me! - 54:10) so You take revenge from them.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَأَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ (So, We responded to him and saved him and his family from the terrible agony - 21:76) Here the expression 'terrible agony' either refers to the drowning in the deluge which annihilated the entire people or the torture which he and his followers suffered at the hands of those people.

Verses 78 - 82

وَدَاوٗدَ وَسُلَيْمٰنَ إِذْ يَحْكُمٰنِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ ۚ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شٰهِدِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَفَهَّمْنٰهَا سُلَيْمٰنَ ۚ وَكُلًّا اٰتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ۖ وَّسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوٗدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ ۚ وَكُنَّا

فَعِلِيْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَعَلَّمْنٰهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوْسٍ لَّكُمْ لِتُحْصِنَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَأْسِكُمْ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ شٰكِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِىْ بِاَمْرِهٖٓ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الَّتِىْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا ۭ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَمِنَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ مَنْ يَّغُوْصُوْنَ لَهٗ وَيَعْمَلُوْنَ عَمَلًا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾

And (remember) Dāwūd and Sulaymān, when they were adjudicating about the tillage, when the goats of the people wandered therein grazing, and We were witness to their judgment. [78] **So, We enabled Sulaymān to understand it. And to each one of them We gave wisdom and knowledge. And with Dāwūd We subjugated the mountains that proclaimed the purity of Allah, and the birds as well. And We were the One who did (it).** [79]

And We taught him making of armour as dress for you, to protect you from what may harm you (in combat). So are you grateful? [80] **And for Sulaymān, (We subjugated) the violent wind that blew under his command to the land in which We placed Our blessings. And We were the One who knew everything.** [81] **And from the devils, (We subjugated for him) those who dived in water for him and did jobs other than that. And We were the One who kept watch over them.** [82]

Commentary

نَفَشَتْ فِيْهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ (the goats of the people wandered therein grazing - 21:78). In Arabic language the word نَفش (translated above as 'wandering and grazing') means an animal getting into a field at night and damaging it.

فَفَهَّمْنٰهَا سُلَيْمٰنَ (So We enabled Sulaymān to understand it - 21:79). This expression means that Allah Ta'ālā had made known to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام the judgment which was better. Although the judgment passed by Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was not in conflict with religious jurisprudence, but the one adjudged by Sulaymān عليه السلام was inspired by Allah and was therefore, more appropriate because it benefitted both the parties without hurting either.

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى has reported this story on authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and Qatādah and Zuhri that two persons came to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام . One of them had a flock of goats and the other one owned a field on which he grew crops. The latter made a complaint against the former that his goats entered his field at night and ate up his crop (It appears that the respondent had accepted the petitioner's complaint and presumably the value of the flock of goats was equal to the value of the crop). Thus Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام announced his judgment that the owner of the goats should give his entire flock to the other man in compensation for his loss. (This judgment was in line with the religious jurisprudence which requires that if goods valued by a price are destroyed by someone, the amount of compensation will be determined according to that price. In this case, the value of the crop was the same as the value of the flock; hence the judgment. When these two men i.e. the complainant and the respondent, emerged from the court of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام they met Sayyidnā Sulayman عليه السلام at the door. He enquired from them about the judgment of their case, which they related to him. After hearing the judgment he remarked that if he were the judge in this case his verdict would have been different, which would be to the benefit of both parties. Then he went to his father Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and repeated the same thing. Thereupon Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام enquired from him as to what kind of verdict he had in mind which would be more beneficial to both the parties. He replied that it would be more just and equitable if the flock of goats is given to the owner of the field so that he could use to his own benefit their milk, wool etc. and his field is given to the goats-man who should cultivate it and grow crops in it. When the field returns to the same condition in which it was before it was eaten by the goats, then the two men should get back their respective properties. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام approved this judgment, called back the two men and announced the second judgment to them. (Maẓharī, Qurṭubī, etc.)

Can the verdict of a Judge (Qāḍī) be changed or annulled after it has been announced?

It will be observed that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had pronounced a judgment which he revoked after hearing the views of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. Here a question arises whether a Qāḍī (Judge) has the authority to change his own verdict pronounced by him earlier.

Qurtubi has discussed this and similar matters in great detail, the gist of which is that where a Qadi (Judge) has given a verdict which is in conflict with the religious jurisprudence or is contrary to the views held by the people at large, then, by consensus of the Ummah, such a verdict is not valid. Then it is not only permissible but mandatory on any other Qadi (Judge) to nullify the verdict and to issue a fresh judgment in line with religious jurisprudence, and also to remove the incompetent Qadi from his position of authority. But, if the judgment of a Qadi is based on religious jurisprudence and *Ijtihad* (اِجتِہاد) then it is not permissible for any other Qadis (Judges) to revoke that judgment, because if this is allowed, the whole judicial system will collapse and Islamic Law will become a plaything in the hands of different people. However, if a Qadi, after passing a verdict according to the dictates of *Ijtihad* realizes that he had erred in his earlier judgment and *Ijtihad,* then it is allowed, rather preferable, that he himself should change the verdict. In a detailed letter which Sayyidna 'Umar ﷺ wrote to Abu Musa al-Asha'ri ﷺ elaborating the principles governing the administration of justice and disposal of court cases, he said that in case *Ijtihad* (اِجتِہاد) changes after announcing a judgment then the judgment should be changed to conform to the changed *Ijtihad* (اِجتِہاد) (This letter is reported by Dar Qutni).

According to great commentator (امام تفسیر) Mujahid رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ both the judgments are bona fide and correct in their own respective right. The verdict passed by Sayyidna Dawud ﷺ was strictly judicial, whereas the judgment made by Sayyidna Sulayman ﷺ was in the nature of a compromise between the two parties. The Holy Qur'an itself says وَالصُّلۡحُ خَيۡرٌ (And compromise is better - 4:129). That is why the second judgment was praised by Allah Ta'ala. (Mazhari)

Sayyidna 'Umar ﷺ had instructed all his Qadis (Judges) that when a dispute was raised before them, they should try to arrange a compromise between the parties. If a compromise was not possible, only then they should pass their judgment according to religious jurisprudence. The advantage in following this procedure, as he described it, was that in a legal judgment the loser has no option but to accept it, but at heart he develops a sense of hostility and hatred against his rival which is not healthy between the two Muslims. On the other hand, in the case of a compromise between the contesting parties, the element of hatred and ill

will is removed. (From Mu'īn al-Ḥukkām)

Therefore, according to the explanation propounded by Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى it was not a case of revoking or changing an earlier verdict, rather a compromise was willingly agreed between both the parties to the dispute, before they left the court.

If two *Mujtāhids* by their separate Ijtihād pass two conflicting verdicts, should both be regarded as valid or should one of them be rejected?

A number of commentators have discussed this subject briefly or in detail whether all *Mujtāhideen* (مُجتهِدِيْن) be regarded as correct in their judgment (مُصِيب) and two opposing verdicts be taken as valid or, in case of conflict, one judgment be accepted and the other rejected. Qurṭubī has dealt this subject in great detail. Religious scholars have held different views on the subject from the very beginning, while projecting their reasoning. All have derived support for their views from this very verse. Those who support the argument that even conflicting verdicts are valid base their reasoning on the last sentence of the verse viz وَكُلاًّ اٰتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا (And to each one of them We gave wisdom and knowledge - 21:79). The sentence points out in clear terms that Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed wisdom and knowledge to both Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sulaymān عليه السلام, and there is no admonition to the former, nor is he warned for any error on his part. Therefore it proves that both the judgments given by Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sulaymān عليه السلام were correct and valid. However, the judgment given by Sulaymān عليه السلام was preferred because it was advantageous to both the parties. As for those who argue that in the event of an *Ijtihādi* (اِجْتِهادِى) difference only one judgment can be correct and the other must be rejected as invalid, they too offer the first sentence of this very verse i.e. فَفَهَّمْنٰهَا سُلَيْمٰنَ (So, We enabled Sulaymān to understand it - 21:79) in support of their argument. They say that there is a specific reference to Sulaymān عليه السلام, to whom the correct decision was revealed by Allah. It, therefore, follows that the verdict announced by Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was not right even though he might have arrived at this decision through his *Ijtihād* (اِجْتِهاد) and was, therefore, free from all blame. This subject has been discussed in great detail in the books of jurisprudence. Here one should keep in mind that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that if some one did *Ijtihād* (اِجْتِهاد) and gave a decision in

accordance with the religious principles governing *Ijtihād* اِجْتِهاد , and his *Ijtihād* is correct, he will be granted two rewards one for the the labour involved in making the *Ijtihād,* and the other for arriving at the right decision. But if he erred in his *Ijtihād* he would still get one reward for just his labour. (This Ḥadīth is reported in most books of authoritative aḥadīth). This Ḥadīth also explains that the difference among the scholars on this issue is one of semantics only .

For those who believe that both the conflicting judgment are valid, the consequences are that for the erring *Mujtāhid* مُجْتَهِد as well as his followers that *Ijtihād* اِجْتِهاد is correct and acting upon it will lead to their salvation. As for the view that only one verdict is correct and the other is wrong, the consequence of that also is no more than that the reward of the erring *Mujtāhid* will be lesser because his *Ijtihād* fell short of the absolute right decision. However, he will be free from all blame and his followers will not be regarded as sinners. (Those who wish to see further details on the subject are advised to refer to Qurṭubī's commentary, where the subject is discussed in great detail).

The question of animals of a person harming another person or damaging his property

One can deduce from the verdict passed by Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام that if the animals of someone damage the property of a person at night, the owner of the animals will have to compensate the suffering party for his loss. However, it does not follow that a verdict given in accordance with the legal code of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام must *ipso facto* be adopted in the Sharī'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ also. This is why there is a difference of opinion among the cardinal jurists on this issue. The ruling given by Imam Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالى says that if someone's animals damage the fields of another person at night, the owner of the animals will have to compensate for the loss, but if the animals damage the field during day time, then there shall be no compensation due on the owner of the animals. This ruling can be said to be drawn from the judgment of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام also, but, in fact he has based his ruling on a saying of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, which has been reported in Muwaṭṭa' of Imām Mālik as Mursal (مُرْسَل). This *ḥadīth* concerns an incident in which a camel belonging to Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه entered someone's orchard and damaged it. The matter when reported to

the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he ruled that the responsibility for protecting these fields and orchards at night rested on the owners, but if in spite of all reasonable measures adopted by them, the animals damaged the crop, then the owner of the animals shall be required to compensate for the loss. On the other hand the Imām Azam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى and other jurists of Kūfa School hold the view that if the owner or the shepherd is with the animals, and yet they damage the field or the orchard due to his negligence, then the compensation for the loss rests with the owner irrespective of whether the damage is caused during day or night. But where unattended animal wandered into somebody's field damaging the same without any negligence on the part of the owner, then the owner of the animals will not be held liable for compensation, regardless of the time of day or night when the damage is caused. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى has based this ruling on the Ḥadīth جرح العجماء جبَار (the wound caused by an animal is not compensated) which is reported by Bukhārī and Muslim and all other Scholars of Ḥadīth. It means that the owner of the animal is not bound to compensate the owner of the field for any loss caused by his animal (provided that the owner or the shepherd is not with the animal at the time of the damage). This saying has set the rule that irrespective of the time of day or night, if the animal has not been let loose deliberately by its owner into somebody's field and the animal has escaped, then the owner is not liable to make good the loss caused by his animal.

Glorification of Allah by birds and mountains

وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوٗدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ وَكُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ (And with Dāwūd We subjugated the mountains that proclaimed the purity of Allah, and the birds as well. And We were the One who did (it) - 21:79.) Allah Ta'ālā had granted Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام a melodious voice among the other outward absolute excellences. When he used to recite Zabūr the birds would stop in their flight and join him in recitation. In the same way the mountains and the trees used to produce sounds as if they were singing praises to glorify Allah. A melodious voice was an external attribute granted to him by Allah and the joining with him of the birds and the mountains in praising Allah with him was a miracle. Now, for a miracle to happen it is not necessary that the birds and the mountains must necessarily possess life and intelligence; rather a miracle can give intelligence and knowledge

to those objects which were without these attributes earlier. However scientific research has proved that rocks and mountains do have life and knowledge to a limited extent.

Among the companions Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ﷺ had a very sweet voice. Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed by him when he was reciting the Holy Qur'ān. The Holy Prophet ﷺ stopped and listened to the recitation. Then he ﷺ remarked that Allah Ta'ālā had granted him the sweet voice of Dāwūd ﷺ. When Abū Mūsā ﷺ learnt that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had been listening to his recitation, he said" Had I known that you were listening, I would have tried to recite with greater care".

The art of making armor was granted to Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ by Allah Ta'ālā

وَعَلَّمْنٰهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوْسٍ لَّكُمْ (And We taught him making of armor as dress for you - 21:80) Lexically, the word لَبُوْس is used for anything which is worn in the neck for protection. Here it is used for armor which is used in battle for protection against enemy. In another verse Allah Ta'ālā says وَاَلَنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيْدَ that is 'We softened for him iron'- 34:10). This means that either the iron used to become soft like wax in Sayyidnā Dāwūd's ﷺ hands or he was taught to heat it up to make it soft and then mould it, a practice which is used in the foundries today.

Skills beneficial to humanity are desirable and are like acts of prophets

The above verse also explains the benefit of the industry of the armor making i.e. لِتُحْصِنَكُمْ مِّنْ بَأْسِكُمْ (to protect you from what may harm you [in combat] - 21:80). This is a need which is felt universally both for religious and worldly purposes. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has said that He had taught this skill to Dāwūd ﷺ which was a gift to him. It therefore follows that the learning and teaching of any skill which serves the need of people is an act of virtue, provided it is meant for the good of people, and not merely for the monetary gain. Different prophets are known to have been engaged in different skills in their time. For instance Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ used his skill in farming. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that an industrialist producing his product with the intention of serving people is like the mother of Mūsā ﷺ who fed her own child and also got paid for her services. Similarly, an industrialist who sets before him the service of humanity as his ideal draws double benefit - one for serving people and

the other in the form of material gain from marketing his industrial products.

Making the air subservient to Sulaymān عليه السلام and related matters

Hasan al-Basrī رحمه الله تعالى has narrated the following story. Once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was inspecting his cavalry horses and got so engrossed in the inspection that he missed the 'Asr prayer. When he realized his lapse, he was very sorry, and removed these horses from service since they were the cause of this lapse. As this action was taken to win the goodwill of Allah and to atone for his negligence, Allah rewarded him by making the wind subservient to him, which is a superior and faster conveyance. Details of this event will appear with the commentary of the relevant verses of Sūrah Ṣād (سورة ص) *inshallah* .

وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ عَاصِفَةً (And for Sulaymān [We subjugated] the violent wind - 21:81) This sentence is a continuation of an earlier verse سَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوٗدَ (And with Dāwūd We subjugated - 21:79). Thus it means that just as Allah Ta'ālā had made birds and hills subservient to Dāwūd عليه السلام who used to sing in praise of Allah while he recited the Zabūr, in the same way He made the wind subservient to Sulaymān عليه السلام who used to fly on its wings swiftly wherever he wanted to go. It is worth noting here that while describing subservience of birds and hills for Dāwūd عليه السلام the word مع (with) has been used, but the subservience of wind for Sulaymān عليه السلام has been described using the letter لام (which means 'for'). In this there is a subtle hint that the subservience in both these cases was different. In the case of Dāwūd عليه السلام the birds and hills used to sing praise of Allah with him simultaneously without any command from him. But in the case of Sulaymān عليه السلام the wind acted according to his commands and carried him where and when he desired. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī, with reference to Al-Baiḍawī).

Ibn Kathīr in his commentary has described in fair detail the platform on which Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was carried by the wind. It was made of wood and was of an enormous size which could accomodate him and all the functionaries of the government as well as the army alongwith their weapons, and the wind carried them all wherever it was commanded to go, covering two month's journey in one day.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has narrated on the authority of Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه that 600,000 six hundred thousand chairs were placed on this

platform on which humans who were also believers sat in front with Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام and behind them sat the believing Jinns. Then the birds were commanded to fly above the platform and protect it from the heat of the sun. Then by the command of Sulaymān عليه السلام the wind would take the platform to a specified destination. Some traditions report that throughout this aerial journey, Sulaymān عليه السلام used to sit with his head bowed down praying to and thanking Allah Ta'ālā in all humility and not turning his head to the right or to the left.

عَاصِفَةً (violent) Literal meaning of رِيْحٌ عَاصِفَةٌ is strong and violent wind. At another place in the Holy Qur'ān the attribute of this wind is given as رُخَاء which means a mild breeze, which neither raises dust nor creates turbulence. On the face of it, these attributes are contradictory, but they can be reconciled in that whereas in itself it was so strong that it could accomplish two month's Journey in one day, yet it did not create any turbulence. It is reported that when this platform used to fly in the air, no birds were ever harmed due to velocity of the wind.

Subservience of Jinns and satans to Sulaymān عليه السلام

وَمِنَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ مَنْ يَّغُوْصُوْنَ لَهٗ وَيَعْمَلُوْنَ عَمَلًا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حٰفِظِيْنَ (And from the devils, (We subjugated for him) those who dived in water for him and did jobs other than that. And We were the One who kept watch over them. - 21:82) That is, Allah made the satan jinn subservient to Sulaymān عليه السلام and they used to dive in the rivers fishing pearls for him. Apart from this, they used to perform other jobs for him, some of which are mentioned in other verses.

يَعْمَلُوْنَ لَهٗ مَا يَشَآءُ مِنْ مَّحَارِيْبَ وَتَمَاثِيْلَ وَ جِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ That is ("Fashioning for him whatsoever he would - places of worship, statues, porringers like water-troughs - 34:13). Sulaymān عليه السلام also used to put them to hard labour and make them work in different projects.

Satans

These are ethereal beings made of fire, who possess intelligence and understanding and are obligated to follow the laws of Sharī'ah like humans. Those beings who fulfill these conditions are described by the word Jinn, while those among them who disobey the rules of Shari'ah and persist in their unbelief are called satans. It is obvious that all Jinns were made subservient to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام whether they were

believers or unbelievers. However, the believers regarded it as their religious duty to obey his wishes even before they were formally placed under his command, and there was no need to make a specific mention of their being placed under subservience to Sulaymān عليه السلام. Hence in the context of the Jinns being made subservient to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام the reference is to satans (unbelieving Jinns) only. They were made to obey him despite their unbelief and defiance. Perhaps, it is for this reason that a sentence is added at the end of the verse saying, "We alone kept watch over them". Sulaymān عليه السلام was exposed to danger from the unbelieving Jinns, but Allah was his protector and they could do him no harm.

It will be observed that while in the case of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام Allah Ta'ālā had made subservient to him things which are extremely hard and dense, like iron and mountains, Sulaymān عليه السلام was given mastery over things which are ethereal and cannot even be perceived e.g. wind and Jinn. This shows that He is omnipotent and that His authority extends over all created things. (Commentary by Ra'zi)

Verses 83 - 84

وَاَيُّوْبَ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّىْ مَسَّنِىَ الضُّرُّ وَ اَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ ج صلے
فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهٖ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَّاٰتَيْنٰهُ اَهْلَهٗ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ
رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرٰى لِلْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾

And (remember) Ayyūb, when he called his Lord saying, "Here I am, afflicted by pain and You are the most merciful of all the merciful." [83] **So, We answered his prayer and removed whatever pain he had, and gave him (back) his family and the like thereof alongwith them, as a mercy from Our own Self and as a lesson for the worshippers.** [84]

Commentary

Story of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام

The story of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام is based mostly on Jewish legends. Those which are considered as historically reliable by scholars of *ḥadīth* are being reproduced here. The Holy Qur'ān tells us only that he suffered

from some serious disease but he endured his suffering with fortitude. Ultimately he prayed to Allah for recovery which was granted. During his illness all his family members and friends disappeared. They either died or just abandoned him to his fate. Then Allah Ta'ālā restored him to complete health and gave him back all his children and also an equal number in addition. The remaining elements of this story have come down to us either through authentic sayings or by way of historical accounts. Ḥafiẓ Ibn Kathīr has recorded the story as follows:

Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed upon Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, in the early days of his life, all sorts of material comforts such as wealth, property, magnificent houses, children, servants and attendants. But later he faced a trial whereby the prophets are normally tested by Allah, and was deprived of all these comforts. Moreover he suffered from a serious disease which was like leprosy and which affected his whole body except the heart and the tongue. In this miserable condition too he spent his time in prayers and in giving thanks to Allah Ta'ālā with his heart and tongue. Because of this serious illness all his relatives, friends and neighbors avoided him and placed him near a garbage-dump outside the city. Nobody went near him except his wife who used to take care of him. She was either the daughter or grand daughter of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام and her name was Layya daughter of Mīsha Ibn Yūsuf عليه السلام. (Ibn Kathīr) All his wealth having been lost, she worked and earned a living for him and for herself and also nursed him in his illness. The ordeal of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was nothing new, nor something to be wondered at. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said اشدّ النّاس بلاء الانبياء ثمّ الصّالحون ثمّ الامثل فالامثل that is the prophets face the most severe tests, and then come the other believers according to their degree of piety. In another tradition it is reported that every man is tested according to his adherence and devotion to religion. The stronger his beliefs, the harder is the test to which he is subjected, so that his rewards are in proportion to his sufferings. Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام occupies a distinctive position among all the prophets for firmness in his devotion and endurance in his sufferings in the same manner as Dāwūd عليه السلام enjoyed distinction for offering thanks to Allah Ta'ālā. Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام is a model of endurance and fortitude in the most trying circumstances. Yazīd Ibn Maisara reports that when Allah Ta'ālā deprived him of all his worldly possessions and subjected him to a severe ordeal, he concentrated all his mind and efforts upon the sole purpose of

remembering Allah Ta'ālā and offering prayers to Him. While thanking Allah Ta'ālā for all sorts of worldly comforts and children granted to him ealier and whose love had filled his heart completely, he also thanked Him for their total withdrawal because nothing remained to distract him from total devotion to Allah Ta'ālā.

The invocation of Sayyidnā Ayyūb ﷺ is not counter to patience

The ordeal of Sayyidnā Ayyūb ﷺ was very severe indeed. He not only lost all his worldly possessions but was also afflicted by a terrible disease because of which people avoided his company. He spent seven years and some months lying near a garbage dump outside the city, but never once did he lose his heart nor did he ever utter a word of complaint about his fate. His wife, Layya once asked him to pray to Allah for His Mercy as his sufferings had become unbearable, to which he replied that having enjoyed for seventy years the best of health surrounded by all the luxuries that money could buy, it would be unworthy of him to complain because a mere seven years has been spent in pain and poverty. His firm prophetic resolve, self-descipline and fortitude prevented him from beseeching Allah Ta'ālā's mercy on his condition, lest it should be construed as an act contrary to the unquestioning submission to the will of Allah Ta'ālā (Although to invoke Allah's Mercy for relief from sufferings does not mean absence of fortitude). Ultimately something happened which made him pray to Allah Ta'ālā for His Mercy but as mentioned earlier this was just a prayer and did not express a sense of complaint. As such Allah Ta'ālā has put His seal in acknowledgment of his extreme endurance in these words إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا (Surely We found him a steadfast man - 38:44). There are numerous versions of this story which have been omitted for their length.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that when Sayyidnā Ayyūb's ﷺ supplication was granted, he was told to rub his heels on the ground and a stream of fresh and clear water would gush forth. He should then bathe himself in the water and also drink it, and the disease would disappear. Sayyidnā Ayyūb ﷺ did as he was told and in no time his body, which was covered with boils and was reduced to skin and bones regained its original shape and health. Allah Ta'ālā sent him garments from Paradise which he wore

and sat down in a corner away from the garbage dump. His wife came to see him as usual and when she did not find him, she started crying. She did not recognize Ayyūb عليه السلام who was sitting nearby in a corner because his appearance had changed completely. Then she turned to him and asked him if he had any information about the sick man who was lying there, and whether he had gone somewhere or had been eaten up by dogs and wolves. She spoke to him for some time without realizing that the man was none other than her husband. Then Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام revealed himself, but even then she did not recognize him and asked him why he was making fun of her. Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام then told her to look at him again and try to recognize him. He also informed her that Allah Ta'ālā had healed his body after he invoked His Mercy. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that after this, Allah Ta'ālā restored to him all his wealth and children and gave him more children equal in number to the children which he had before (Ibn Kathīr).

Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه says that Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام had seven sons and seven daughters but they all died while he was undergoing the ordeal. When his days of hardship were over, his children were brought back to life by Allah Ta'ālā and his wife also gave birth to as many more children, to which the Qur'ān refers to as وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ (and the like thereof alongwith them - 21:84). According to Tha'labi this version is closer to the text of the Qur'ān. (Qurṭubī)

Some scholars say that he was granted as many new children as he had before and the word مِثْل (the like) refers to an equal number of grand children. (Only Allah knows best).

Verses 85 - 86

وَإِسْمٰعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَ

أَدْخَلْنٰهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا ۖ إِنَّهُم مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

And (remember) Isma'īl and Idrīs and Dhul-Kifl. Each one of them was of those who observed patience. [85] **And We admitted them to Our mercy. Surely, they were**

of the righteous. [86]

Commentary

Whether Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl was a prophet or a saint and his strange story

Three persons are mentioned in the above two verses. Out of these three there is no doubt about the prophethood of Sayyidnā Isma'il عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Idris عليه السلام as they are mentioned in the Qur'ān as such several times. Ibn Kathir is of the opinion that the mention of the name of Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl alongwith the other two prophets in the above verse shows that he too was a prophet. However, some other versions do not include him in the category of prophets. They say that he was a saint or a pious person.

Imām of Tafsir Ibn Jarir رحمه الله تعالى has reported on the authority of Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى that where Sayyidnā Yasa' عليه السلام (who is referred to as a prophet in the Holy Qur'ān) became old and weak, he thought of appointing some one who could perform the duties of a prophet on his behalf during his life time. He assembled all his companions for this purpose and told them of his desire to appoint someone who would act as his deputy but who must fulfill three conditions namely that he should fast all the year round, should spend the nights in prayers and does not ever lose his temper. A relatively unknown person who was held in contempt by the people, stood up and offered himself for the job. Sayyidnā Yasa' عليه السلام asked him whether he fasted all the year round, spent his nights in prayers and never lost his temper. The man replied in the affirmative and confirmed that he fulfilled all the three conditions. Perhaps Sayyidnā Yasa' عليه السلام did not believe his claim and rejected him. After a few days Sayyidnā Yasa' عليه السلام reconvened the meeting and repeated his conditions and asked his companions if any of them met the requirements. Everyone remained seated but the same man stood up again and claimed that he fulfilled the three conditions. Then Yasa' عليه السلام appointed him his deputy. When Satan realized that Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl had been selected as a deputy to Yasa' عليه السلام he asked all his aides to go to Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl and inveigle him into doing something which would result in his removal from the post of deputy. All his aides excused themselves and said that he was beyond their power to harm. The Satan (Iblis) then said "Alright, leave him to me. I will take care of him."

Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl, true to his claim, used to fast during the day and pray the whole night and had a little nap in the afternoon. Satan went to him just when he was about to take his afternoon nap and knocked at the door. He got up and enquired who was there. The Satan replied "I am an old tortured man". So he opened the door and let him in. The Satan came in and started a yarn about the cruelty and injustice which he suffered at the hands of his community and relatives. He stretched the story so long that no time was left for Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl to take his usual nap. So, he told the old man (Satan) that he should come to him at the time when he came out, and he would cause justice to be done to him.

Later on Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl sat in his court and waited for the old man but he did not turn up. Next morning he again waited for the old man in his court but again he did not come. Then in the afternoon when he was about to have his nap, the old man came and started beating at the door. He enquired who he was, and the Satan replied again - "an old tortured man" so, he opened the door and asked him "Didn't I tell you to come to my court yesterday but you failed to appear, nor did you come this morning?" To this the Satan answered "Sir, my enemies are very wicked people; when they learnt that you were sitting in your court and would force them to give back to me what was my due, they agreed to settle the matter out of court. But as soon as you left your court, they went back on their promise". Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl asked him again to come to his court when he was there. All this conversation continued for such a long time that he could not have his usual nap on that day also. He then went to the court and waited for the old man, who again did not turn up. The next day again he waited for him until late in the noon but to no avail. When he returned home on that day, he was very sleepy because of lack of sleep for last two days. Therefore, he asked the family members not to allow any one to knock at the door. The old man came again and wanted to knock at the door but the family members stopped him, so he entered the house through a ventilator, and started knocking at the door of his room, Sayyidnā Dhul-Kifl got up again and saw that the old man had come inside the house while the door was still closed. So he asked him as to how he had entered the house.

Then suddenly he became aware that the man standing before him

was Satan and asked him "Are you the God's enemy Iblīs?" He admitted that he was Satan and remarked, "You have thwarted all my plans and frustrated all my efforts to entice you in my design. My intention was to make you angry somehow, so that one of your claims before Yasa' عليه السلام could be proved false." It was because of this episode that he was given the title Dhul-Kifl, which means a person who is true to his covenant and performs his duties faithfully, and this title was fully deserved by him. (Ibn Kathīr)

Another narrative is quoted in Masnād of Aḥmad but has the name of the person Alkifl instead of Dhul-Kifl. That is why Ibn Kathīr has observed after quoting this narrative that he was a different person and not Dhul-Kifl, who is mentioned in this verse. The narrative is as follows:

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه has reported that he had heard a *ḥadīth* (حديث) from the Holy Prophet ﷺ not once, but more than seven times that there was a man by the name Kifl among the Banī Isrā'īl who did not abstain from any type of sin. Once a woman came to him and he persuaded her to have sexual intercourse with him on payment of sixty guineas. When he got down to start the intercourse, the woman started crying and trembling. So he enquired from her as to what the matter was because he had not used any kind of force on her. The woman replied that the cause of her distress was that she had never in all her life committed adultery and that it was only her adverse circumstances which had forced her to agree to the act. Hearing this the man got up and told her to go away and keep the money he had given her. He also promised her that he would never again indulge in any sin. Then it so happened that he died the same night and in the morning it was seen that there was a hidden writing on his door that Kifl had been pardoned by Allah غفر الله للكفل. Ibn Kathīr observed after quoting this from Masnad of Ahmad that none of the six authentic books on ḥadīth has reported this tradition and its authority is weak. Even if the tradition is true, it mentioned the name as Kifl and not Dhul-Kifl, which means he was some other person. (Allah knows best).

The sum and substance of this story is that Dhul-Kifl was the deputy of Prophet Yasa' عليه السلام and it is possible that because of his virtuous deeds

his name has been mentioned along with prophets. It is also possible that initially he was the deputy of Sayyidnā Yasa' عليه السلام and later on he was elevated to the status of a prophet by Allah Ta'ālā.

Verses 87 - 88

وَذَا النُّوْنِ اِذْ ذَّهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ نَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادٰى فِى الظُّلُمٰتِ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ اِنِّىْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾

And (remember) Dhunnūn (the man of the fish, namely Yūnus), when he walked away in anger and thought that We will never put him to trouble. Then, he called (Us) in depths of darkness saying, "There is no god but You. Pure are You. Indeed I was among the wrongdoers". [87] **So We responded to him and rescued him from the distress. And this is how We rescue the believers.** [88]

Commentary

وَذَا النُّوْنِ (21:87) The story of Sayyidnā Yūnus Ibn Mattā عليه السلام appears in the Holy Qur'ān in Sūrah Yūnus, Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', Sūrah As-Ṣaffāt and Surah Nūn. At some places he is mentioned by his real name and at others by the title as *Dhunnūn* or *Sahibul Ḥūt*. The meaning of Nūn and *Ḥūt* both is fish. Thus, *Dhunnūn* and *Sahibul Ḥūt* can be translated as man of the fish. Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام remained inside the stomach of a fish for a few days in very odd circumstances by the will of Allah. It is because of this episode that he is sometimes referred to as *Dhunnūn* or *Sahib Al-Hut*.

The Story of Yūnus عليه السلام

According to the commentary by Ibn Kathīr, Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام was sent to preach Allah's message among the people of Nineveh which is a township in the region of Mousel. Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام invited them towards Islam and asked them to follow the true religion and perform good deeds, but they rejected his call and behaved in an arrogant and defiant manner. Being dejected and annoyed, Yūnus عليه السلام left the place after warning them that Allah's wrath would descend upon them within three days. After he had departed from the township, the people realized

that his warning might come true. (According to some versions they had actually seen the signs of the impending disaster). So they repented and asked pardon for their sins and the entire population retired to a forest with their cattle and animals. Then they started lamenting and bewailing and invoked Allah's forgiveness and protection. Allah Ta'ālā accepted their sincere contrition and wailing over their sins and released them from the fear of the impending disaster. While all these events were taking place, Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام waited expecting the news about the destruction of his people. But when he learnt that the storm had passed and his people were safe and sound, he worried that they would regard him as a liar. According to some versions, it was customary with his people to execute a person if he was proved a liar. (Mazharī). Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام, therefore, feared for his life and decided to go away to some other place rather than returning to his own people. He came across a river on his way and boarded a boat to cross it. While crossing the river it so happened that the boat was caught in a whirlpool and was in danger of sinking. The boatmen decided that if one of the passengers was off loaded from the boat the chances were that the rest of them would be saved from drowning. So they cast lots to decide as to who should be off-loaded. As luck would have it they drew the name of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام . It seems that the boatmen were aware of his exalted position and they refused to throw him in the river. The lot was drawn a second and then a third time and his name was drawn on both occasions. This episode has been mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'ān in the following words: فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ (and cast lots, and was of the rebutted - 37:141). Thereupon Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام got up, took off the extra clothes which he was wearing and threw himself in the river. Immediately a fish from the Caspian Sea arrived on the scene as commanded by Allah Ta'ālā and swallowed Yūnus عليه السلام . (as reported by Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه). The fish was further commanded by Allah Ta'ālā that he was not to be taken for food, that no harm was to be done to his body (both flesh and bones) and that he was only to be held as a prisoner in its stomach for a few days. (Ibn Kathīr)

There are references in the Qur'ān that Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام earned Allah Ta'ālā's displeasure when he left his people without His specific command and his stay for a few days in the stomach of the fish was a sign of Allah's displeasure for his lapse.

It is safe to assume that the warning of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام to his people about their imminent destruction within three days was not the outcome of his own judgment but was based on Divine revelations. Similarly, his dissociation from his people was nothing new and was in line with the practice of other prophets in similar situations and must, therefore, also have been done by the command and approval from Allah Ta'ālā. So, upto this point there seems nothing to be wrong in his conduct which would deserve Allah Ta'ālā's displeasure. But later on when Allah Ta'ālā accepted the genuine remorse and repentance of the people and released them from the fear of destruction, it was to be expected that Yūnus عليه السلام would return to his people. But his decision not to return to them and go away from them was based on his own judgment (اِجْتِهَاد). He reasoned that if he returned to them, they would regard him as a liar and his teachings would be rendered ineffectual and fruitless. There was also the danger that he might have been taken and executed. For these reasons he was hopeful that his parting with his people would not be a reprehensible act before Allah Ta'ālā. Although his decision to migrate was based on his personal judgment (Ijtihad اِجْتِهَاد) without waiting for a clear direction from Allah Ta'ālā, yet it did not constitute a sin. Nevertheless for a prophet to take a decision on his own without waiting for the revelation (وَحی) from Allah Ta'ālā was not liked by Him. This was not a crime but an act which was not desirable. The status of the prophets and His closed ones is highly exalted and it is expected of them not to indulge even in such undesirable acts. The slightest lapse on their part is subjected to Allah's displeasure and reproach from Him, and that is why he faced this hardship.

It is quoted in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī from al-Qushairi that this had happened to Yūnus عليه السلام when the tempest was removed from his people, which was against his wish and that his stay in the stomach of the fish for a few days was more of a reformatory measure than punishment, as sometimes people warn their young children and take reformatory measures against them. (Qurṭubī)

After learning the background of the episode it would be easier to understand the meanings of the verses which is as follows.

ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا (he walked away in anger 21:87) It is obvious that the anger was against his own people. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has explained it as such.

فَظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ نَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ (and thought We will never put him to trouble - 21:87) Lexically the word نَقْدِر has three different meanings: If it is derived from قُدْرَة the meaning would be that Sayyidna Yunus ﷺ imagined that Allah Ta'ala would not be able to gain mastery over him. This is obviously an unacceptable explanation as no Muslim can ever entertain such thoughts in his mind, least of all a prophet of Allah. Alternatively if it is considered that the word نَقْدِر is derived from قَدْر then the meaning would be to straighten or narrow down, as the Qur'an says:

اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ (Allah extends provision to whom He wills and straitens it.) The Imams of Tafsir Ata', Sa'id Ibn Jubair, Hasan Basri and many other scholars have adopted this interpretation, and therefore the meaning of the verse would be that Yunus ﷺ thought that he would not be put in a straitened condition by Allah Ta'ala if he abandoned his people. This second explanation is adopted by most commentators (and the translation of the text as appeared above is based on it). The third possibility is that نَقْدِر is a derivative of تَقْدِيْر in which case the verse would mean that Yunus ﷺ was sure that he would not be blamed if he dissociated himself from his people. Qatadah, Mujahid and Farra' have adopted this explanation.

The prayer of Yunus ﷺ is invoked by all people at all times and for all their needs

وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (And this is how We rescue the believers - 21:87.) That is, just as We released Yunus ﷺ from his misery and distress, so do We deliver other believers (مُؤْمِنِيْن) when they turn towards Us repenting their sins sincerely.

According to a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ if a Muslim prays to Allah Ta'ala for the grant of a wish in the words used by Yunus ﷺ when he was in the stomach of the fish i.e. لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ اِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ (21:87) He would accept his prayer and grant his wish. (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Mazhari)

Verses 89 - 90

وَزَكَرِيَّآ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِيْ فَرْدًا وَّاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ ۚ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗ يَحْيٰى وَاَصْلَحْنَا لَهٗ زَوْجَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا

يُسٰرِعُوْنَ فِى الْخَيْرٰتِ وَيَدْعُوْنَنَا رَغَبًا وَّرَهَبًا ؕ وَكَانُوْا لَنَا خٰشِعِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾

And (remember) Zakariyyā when he called his Lord, "O my Lord do not leave me alone and You are the best of inheritors." [89] **So, We responded to him and gave him Yaḥyā and made his wife good for him. They used to race towards the good deeds and call Us with hope and fear; and they were humble to Us.** [90]

Commentary

Sayyidnā Zakariyyā عليه السلام wished for a son and heir for which he prayed to Allah. But at the same time he made it clear that Allah is the best heir no matter if he had a son or not (اَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ You are the best of inheritors - 21:89). This was the manifestation of the prophetic respect in that the main concern of the prophets should always be toward Allah Ta'ālā, and even if some one else came into focus, their attention should not deviate from the main objective.

يَدْعُوْنَنَا رَغَبًا وَّ رَهَبًا (and call Us with hope and fear - 21:90). This may be interpreted to mean that they call Allah Ta'ālā both in comfort and distress. The other explanation of the verse is that during their prayers they remain suspended between hope and fear hoping that Allah would forgive their sins and fearing that their lapses may bring on them His displeasure.

Verse 91

وَالَّتِىْٓ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ رُّوْحِنَا وَجَعَلْنٰهَا وَ ابْنَهَآ اٰيَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾

And (remember) her who protected her private part. So, We blew in her (a life) through Our Spirit, and made her and her son a sign for all the worlds. [91]

Commentary

This verse directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ to tell his people the story of the pious lady who controlled her passions and then through Jibra'īl عليه السلام Allah had breathed His Spirit into her and she gave birth to a son (Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام) who was a symbol of Allah's Divine Power that He can cause babies to be born without a father, and also without both the

parents as in the case of Sayyidnā 'Ādam (عليه السلام).

Verses 92 - 105

اِنَّ هٰذِهٖٓ اُمَّتُكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً ۖ وَّاَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَ تَقَطَّعُوْٓا
اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ كُلٌّ اِلَيْنَا رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهٖ ۚ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ كٰتِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَحَرٰمٌ عَلٰى
قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَآ اَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَاْجُوْجُ
وَمَاْجُوْجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَّنْسِلُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ
الْحَقُّ فَاِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ اَبْصَارُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ يٰوَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِيْ
غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هٰذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ اَنْتُمْ لَهَا وٰرِدُوْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ لَوْ كَانَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اٰلِهَةً مَّا
وَرَدُوْهَا ۭ وَكُلٌّ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا
يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰىٓ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ عَنْهَا
مُبْعَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ حَسِيْسَهَا ۚ وَهُمْ فِيْ مَا اشْتَهَتْ
اَنْفُسُهُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ لَا يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْاَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقّٰىهُمُ
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ۭ هٰذَا يَوْمُكُمُ الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ يَوْمَ نَطْوِي
السَّمَآءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ۭ كَمَا بَدَاْنَآ اَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيْدُهٗ ۭ
وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَا ۭ اِنَّا كُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُوْرِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ
الذِّكْرِ اَنَّ الْاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

Surely, this is the fraternity of your Faith, a single Faith, and I am your Lord; so worship Me. [92]

And they split up their ways from one another. All of them have to return to Us. [93] **So, the one who does righteous deeds, while he is a believer, his effort will not be rejected and We are to put it on record.** [94]

It is banned for (the people of) a town We destroyed that they come back [95] **until when the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (Gog and Magog) are released, while they run down from every height,** [96] **and the True Promise draws near, then suddenly the eyes of the disbelievers shall remain upraised (in terror and they will say,) "Woe to us! We were neglectful to this; rather we were transgressors indeed."** [97]

Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel of Jahannam. There you will have to arrive. [98] **Had they been gods, they would not have arrived at it. And all of them will remain there forever.** [99] **There are screams for them therein and they will not hear.** [100] **Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it.** [101] **They will not hear the slightest of its sound, and they will remain for ever in what their selves desire.** [102] **They shall not be grieved by the Biggest Panic, and the angels shall receive them (saying), "This is your day that you had been promised"** [103] **- the Day when We roll up the sky like a scroll rolls up the writings. As We originated the first creation, We shall bring it back again - a promise (undertaken to be binding) on Us. We are sure to do it.** [104] **And We have written in Zabūr (Psalms) after the Dhikr (the Torah) that the land will be inherited by My righteous slaves.** [105]

Commentary

So far the Sūrah deals with the stories of the prophets and several basic as well as minor principles relevant to those stories. The basic beliefs such as Oneness of God, prophethood and the day of Resurrection are common to all prophets and are the foundation of their invitation to the people to follow the True Faith.

وَحَرَامٌ عَلٰى قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا اَنَّهُمْ لَايَرْجِعُوْنَ (It is banned for (the people of) a town We destroyed that they come back - 21:95.) Commentators have given two different meanings to this verse. One, that the town and its people which Allah Ta'ālā has destroyed cannot come back to life. The second explanation is that it is binding on the town which Allah has destroyed that it shall not return to this world. (Qurṭubī) Thus the meaning of the verse is that the door of repentance is closed after death, and it is no more

possible for someone to return to this world and atone for his sins by performing righteous deeds. The final court will take place on the Day of Judgment.

حَتّٰىٓ اِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَاْجُوْجُ وَمَاْجُوْجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَّنْسِلُوْنَ (Until when the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (Gog and Magog) are released, while they run down from every height - 21:96.) In the previous verse it was said that those who died in a state of unbelief will never return to this world. The phrase "until the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj appear", really means that such people will never return, because the appearance of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj will be a sign of near approach of the Dooms Day.

It is reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim through Sayyidnā Hudhaifah ﷺ that he and some other Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, were in the midst of a discussion when the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to them and enquired as to what were they deliberating. They replied that they were discussing about the Qiyāmah (Dooms Day). Thereupon he ﷺ said that Qiyāmah will occur only after ten signs have become manifest, and the appearance of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj will be one of them.

Here the word فُتِحَتْ (released) is used for Ya'jūj Ma'jūj which means to let loose, which suggests that until the appointed time they will remain under restraint and confined behind some barrier from which they will be released when Doomsday is near. It is evident from the Holy Qur'ān that this restraint is the wall made by Dhulqarnain which will disappear near the Qiyāmah. Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj and Dhulqarnain have been described in fair detail in Sūrah Al-Kahf, to which the reader may refer.

مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَّنْسِلُوْنَ (while they run down from every height - 21:96) The word حَدَبٍ means an elevated place which may be a mountain or just a lump in the ground. We have also seen in Sūrah Al-Kahf that the place where Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj have been confined is somewhere beyond the northern mountains. So when they will come out, they will be seen rushing down the mountain sides in their hordes.

اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ (Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel of Jahannam - 21:98) Here a question may arise as to the application of this verse to the case of Sayyidnā Masīḥ ﷺ, Sayyidnā 'Uzair ﷺ and angels who were also worshipped by some people. According to account given by Qurṭubī in his Tafsir, this issue was

adequately resolved by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ who wondered that there is a verse in the Qur'ān about which people have reservations, yet they do not question him about it. He went on to say that this may be due to the fact that either the people have found a convincing answer to their doubts or that they are totally indifferent and do not consider the matter important enough for any kind of investigation. When people asked him which particular verse he had in mind, he recited the verse إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ and went on to say that when this verse was revealed, it made the unbelievers of Quraish very angry because they felt that it offended their gods. So they approached Ibn al-Ziba'rā (A scholar of the scriptures) and complained to him about it. He said that if he were present there, he would have given them a reply which would have confounded all of them. Pressed further he said that he would have asked them what they thought about Sayyidnā Masīḥ ﷺ and about Sayyidnā 'Uzair ﷺ, who were worshipped by the Christians and the Jews respectively (meaning whether they too معاذ الله would be sent to Hell). The unbelievers of Quraish were delighted to hear this and were sure that Muḥammad ﷺ would have no answer to their question. At that point Allah Ta'ālā revealed the verse : إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ (Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it. - 21:101) that is those for whom Our grace and good result is ensured will be kept away from Hell. And for the same Ibn al-Ziba'rā Allah Ta'ālā has revealed this Qur'ānic verse وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ (43:57) that is when Ibn al-Ziba'rā put forward the example of Sayyidah Maryam the people of his clan, Quraish, were overtaken by joy.

لَا يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ (They will not be grieved by the Biggest Panic - 21:103). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ (the Biggest Panic) refers to the second call of the Horn (صُوْر), when all the dead will assemble to give an account of their actions in the world. Some others have said that الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ (the Biggest Panic) is the first call of the Horn. Ibn Al-'Arabī has said that the Horn will be blown thrice: The first call will be نَفْخَةُ الْفَزَعِ which will put everyone into utter confusion, and is referred to here as الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ (the Biggest Panic). The second call will be نَفْخَةُ الصَّعْقِ when every one will die. The third call will be نَفْخَةُ الْبَعْثِ when all the dead will be resurrected. This version derives support from a ḥadīth of Abū Hurairah ﷺ which has been quoted in Musnād Abū Ya'lā and

Baihaqi, 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Abū al-Sheikh, Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari etc. (Maẓharī).

يَوْمَ نَطْوِى السَّمَآءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ (The Day when We roll up the sky like a scroll rolls up the writings. - 21:104.) According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ the word سِجِلّ means a sheet of a book. 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalḥah, 'Aufī, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Kathīr have all adopted the same meaning of the word. The word كُتُب in the verse is used for اَلْمَكْتُوب th ıt is something written. So the meaning of the verse is that the sky will be rolled up like a scroll with its writings. (Ibn Kathīr)

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī contains a story on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Judgement Allah Ta'ālā would roll up all the seven skies and the seven worlds alongwith all the created things thereon in His hand, and all of them together would be no more than a grain of rye in His hand. (Ibn Kathīr)

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِى الزَّبُوْرِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ اَنَّ الْاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِىَ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ (And We have written in Zabūr (Psalms) after the Dhikr (the Torah) that the land will be inherited by My righteous slaves. - 21:105) The word زَبُوْر (zabūr) is the plural of زُبُرّ (zuburr), which means book. It is also the name of the book which was revealed to Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ . Opinions differ as to the meaning of the word in the present context. According to a version attributed to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ the word ذِكر in the verse refers to Torah, and زبور to all other books revealed after Torah i.e. Zabūr (Psalms) , Injīl (Evangel) and Qur'ān. (Ibn Jarīr) The same explanation is adopted by Ḍaḥḥāk. However, Ibn Zaid has explained that ذكر refers to لوح محفوظ (the Preserved Tablet) and زبور relates to all the books which were revealed to the prophets. Zajjāj has also adopted this explanation. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

اَلْاَرْض (the word 'land' in - 21:105) All commentators agree that the word in this verse refers to the land of Paradise. Ibn Jarīr has reported this explanation from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. The same explanation is also adopted by Mujāhid, Ibn Jubair, Ikrimah, Suddī and Ab Al-'Aaliyah. Imām Rāzi has said that another verse of the Holy Qur'ān supports this explanation. The verse is وَاَوْرَثَنَا الْاَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ (And has bequeathed upon us the earth for us to make our dwelling wheresoever

we will in Paradise - 39:74) The words used in the verse that the pious will inherit the ارض also lend credence to the view that the word أَرْض means land of Paradise, because the land of the earth can be inherited by all, whether believers or non-believers. Also the phrase that the pious will inherit the land (أَرْض) follows the mention of Qiyāmah, and it is well known that after the Qiyāmah there will be no land of the earth but only the land of the Paradise. Another version of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that the word ارض means just land, and includes both the land of the earth as well as of Paradise. It is quite obvious that the land of the Paradise will be inherited by the pious people. As for the land of the world also it is stated in the Holy Qur'ān at several places that there will be a time when the entire land of the world will belong to the pious believers. One of such verse is: إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (Surely, the land belongs to Allah. He lets whomsoever He wills, from among His slaves, inherit it. And the end-result is in favour of the God-fearing. - 7:128).

In another verse it is said: وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ (Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them (His) vicegerents in the land. - 24:55).

Yet another verse says: إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ (Surely, We shall help Our Messengers and those who have believed in the present life, and upon the day when the witnesses arise. - 40:51).

The history has already witnessed the control of the pious believers over the better part of the world, and it will again come under their control during the time of Sayyidnā Mahdi ﷺ. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī & Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 106 - 112

إِنَّ فِي هَٰذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً
لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَهَلْ
أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ آذَنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ وَإِنْ
أَدْرِي أَقَرِيبٌ أَمْ بَعِيدٌ مَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَإِنْ أَدْرِي لَعَلَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ لَكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ

حِيْنٍ ﴿١١١﴾ قٰلَ رَبِّ احْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمٰنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلٰى مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾

Surely, in this (the Qur'ān) there is a message conveyed to a people who worship (Allah). [106] **And We have not sent you but as mercy for all the worlds.** [107]

Say, "What is revealed to me is simply that your God is One God. So do you submit?" [108] **But, if they turn away, then say (to them), "I have warned you all alike, and I do not know whether what you have been warned of is near or far.** [109] **Surely, He knows what is spoken openly and He knows what you conceal.** [110] **And I do not know; perhaps it is a trial for you and an enjoyment for a while."** [111]

He (Our Messenger) said, "My Lord, judge with truth. And Our Lord is the Raḥmān (All-Merciful), the One whose help is sought against what you describe. [112]

Commentary

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنٰكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ (And We have not sent you but as mercy for all the worlds. - 21:107) عَالَمِيْن is plural of عَالَم which means 'world' and includes all creatures including humans, animals, plants, Jinns etc. In order to properly understand the meaning of the verse one should also understand that the true essence of the entire universe is the invocation of Allah Ta'ālā and His worship. When this essence departs from this world and no one is left to worship Allah, everything in it will perish. In other words that is the day when Qiyāmah would occur. When it is understood that the invocation and worship of Allah Ta'ālā is the essence of all living things, then the reason for describing the Holy Prophet ﷺ as mercy to the Worlds becomes obvious because it is his teachings and the purity of his personal life alone which keep alive the worship of Allah Ta'ālā until Qiyāmah. That is why he declared "I am the blessing sent by Allah أَنَا رَحْمَةٌ مُّهْدَاةٌ (Ibn 'Asākir quoting Abū Hurairah). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ؓ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said أَنَا رَحْمَةٌ مُّهْدَاةٌ بِرَفْعِ قَوْمٍ وَخَفْضِ آخَرِيْنَ that is "I am the blessing sent by Allah so that I lift up the people (who obey Allah) and humble the other people (who disobey Allah). (Ibn Kathīr)

It, therefore, follows that performing *jihād* against the unbelievers in order to lessen *shirk* and *kufr* (unbelief) and in the hope of reclaiming those who transgress the Divine Commands of Allah Ta'ālā is an act of mercy.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Anbiya'
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Ḥajj

(The Pilgrimage)

Sūrah Al-Ḥajj was revealed in Madīnah. It contains 78 Verses and 10 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 2

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَٰرَىٰ وَمَا هُم بِسُكَٰرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾

O men, fear your Lord. Surely the earthquake of the (destined) Hour is something terrible. [1] **The day you will see it, every suckling female will forget that which she suckled, and every pregnant one shall abort her foetus, and you will see people as if they are drunk, while they are not drunk, but the punishment of Allah is (so) severe.** [2]

Commentary

Special features

Commentators differ on whether this Sūrah is Makkan or Madani. Ibn 'Abbās ﵄ has expressed two views on different occasions. However, a majority of commentators believe that the Sūrah is a combination of both the Makkan and Madani verses, and Qurṭubī prefers this view. He has also mentioned the other peculiarities of this Sūrah, namely that some of

its verses were revealed at night and some during the day; some were revealed during travels and some when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not traveling; some were revealed in Makkah and others at Madīnah; some were revealed in the middle of battle and others in peace time. Some verses of this Sūrah are *nāsikh* (verses of the Qur'ān abrogating some other verses), and some are *mansookh* (verses of the Qur'ān which have been abrogated by others); some are *muḥkam* while others are *mutashabih* (مُتشابه). Indeed this Sūrah comprises all categories of revelations.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ (O men, fear your Lord. - 22:1). This verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ while he was traveling. He recited in a loud voice, so that all his companions gathered around him after hearing his voice. Then he addressed them "Do you know when the upheaval of the Resurrection, which is mentioned in this verse, will take place?" They replied, "Allah and His Prophet knows best." Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "That will be the day when Allah will command Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام to raise those people who have been marked out for hell. Sayyidnā Adam عليه السلام will ask Allah Ta'ala who those people are, and Allah will inform him that nine hundred and ninety nine out of every one thousand will go to hell." The Holy Prophet ﷺ then added, "That will be the time when small children will become old on account of terror, and pregnant women will abort their fetuses." The companions were frightened when they heard this and asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "O prophet of Allah! Who are those among us who will escape this terrible fate?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "Set your minds at ease. For every one thousand of the Gog and Magog (Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj) there will be only one from amongst you." This incident is reported in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه. There are other versions also according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, "On the Day of Resurrection you will find yourself with two peoples who will predominate numerically all the other peoples who would be near them. One of them is the tribe of Gog and Magog (ياجوج ماجوج) and the other is the Satan and his descendants, and those of the progeny of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام who have died earlier." Thus, among the nine hundred and ninety nine the majority will be from those peoples. Qurṭubī and others have quoted these narrations.

When will the earthquake of the Day of Resurrection take place?

Will it happen before or after the dead are raised to life? Some people have opined that the earthquake will occur in this world before the Day of Judgment and will be among the last signs of the coming of the Dooms Day, to which reference has been made in several verses of the Qur'ān, such as :

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْاَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

When earth is shaken with a mighty shaking - 99:1

وَ حُمِلَتِ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَّاحِدَةً

And the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow - 69:14

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْاَرْضُ رَجًّا

When the earth shall be rocked. 56:4

There are others who have deduced from the above-referred *ḥadīth* that the earthquake will occur after the Dooms Day and Resurrection. In fact there is no inconsistency between these two views, because verses of the Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ may be quoted in support of either view. Allah knows best.

This verse also gives a picture of the earthquake of the Day of Resurrection when all the pregnant women will abort their fetuses and every breast-feeding woman nursing her child will be diverted from it. If the earthquake takes place in this world before the Dooms Day, then there is no ambiguity in all these happenings. But if the earthquake occurs after the Dooms Day, then the explanation would be that a pregnant woman would be raised on the Dooms Day in the same state, and a woman who died while breast-feeding her child will also be raised in the same condition along with her child. (Qurṭubī). Allah knows best.

Verses 3 - 10

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِى اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّرِيْدٍ ﴿٣﴾ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ اَنَّهٗ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَاَنَّهٗ يُضِلُّهٗ وَيَهْدِيْهِ اِلٰى عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٤﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَاِنَّا

خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَّغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ ۭ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْاَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاۗءُ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْٓا اَشُدَّكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ وَتَرَى الْاَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاۗءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَاَنْۢبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍۢ بَهِيْجٍ ﴿٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّهٗ يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى وَاَنَّهٗ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَّاَنَّ السَّاعَةَ اٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِي الْقُبُوْرِ ﴿٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِي اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّلَا هُدًى وَّلَا كِتٰبٍ مُّنِيْرٍ ﴿٨﴾ ثَانِيَ عِطْفِهٖ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ لَهٗ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَّنُذِيْقُهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيْقِ ﴿٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدٰكَ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿١٠﴾

And among the people there is one who debates about Allah without knowledge and follows every rebellious Satan, [3] about whom it is destined that if someone takes him as friend, he will misguide him and lead him to the punishment of the Fire. [4]

O men, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then (recall that) We created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then from a clot, then from a piece of flesh - shaped or unshaped - so that We manifest (Our power) to you. And We retain in the wombs whatever We will to a specified term. Then We bring you out as babies, then (We nourish you) so that you reach your maturity. And among you there is one who dies, and among you there is one who is carried to the worst part of the age, so that he knows nothing even after having knowledge. And you see the land dry. Then when We send down water on it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of good looking growth. [5]

That is because Allah is the truth and that He gives life to the dead and that He is powerful to do everything, [6] **and that the Hour (of Doom) has to come in which there is no doubt and that Allah will raise again all those in the graves.** [7]

And among men there is one who debates about Allah with no knowledge, no guidance and no book to enlighten, turning his side away to lead (people) astray from the way of Allah. For him there is disgrace in this world, and We will have him taste the punishment of fire on the Day of Judgment (and will say to him) "All this is due to what your hands sent ahead, and that Allah is not unjust to His servants." [10]

Commentary

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِى اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ (And among men there is one who debates about Allah with no knowledge - 22:8.) This verse was revealed with particular reference to Naḍr Ibn al-Ḥārith, who was a very quarrelsome person. He claimed that the angels were Allah's daughters, and that the Qur'ān was a storybook, which contained fables about people of bygone ages. He denied the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection of the dead. Although this verse relates to a particular person, its message applies to all who are in a similar situation, and practice such wickedness.

Different stages in the development of foetus in mother's womb

فَاِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ (We created you from dust - 22:5.) This verse deals with the different stages through which the foetus passes in its mother's womb before taking a human form. There is a detailed *ḥadīth* on this subject, which is reproduced in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ to the effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Human matter retains its original form in the woman's womb for forty days after which it becomes a clot of blood. After a further period of forty days it becomes a lump of flesh. Thereafter an angel is sent by Allah Ta'ālā who breaths a soul into it and records four things about it, namely how long it will live, how much sustenance it will receive, what acts he will do, and finally whether its end will be wretched or fortunate. (Qurṭubī).

There is another narration which has been related by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr, also on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ, that

when the seed becomes a lump of flesh after passing through different stages, the angel responsible to watch the progressive development of each individual then seeks guidance from Allah Ta'ālā saying: يَارَبِّ مُخَلَّقَة اَوغير مخلقه. That is, whether it is His will that the lump of flesh should be allowed to grow and become a living human being. If Allah says it is: غَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَهِ then the womb aborts the foetus and it does not reach the higher stages leading to a live birth. On the other hand, if Allah says that it is: مُخَلَّقَهِ then the angel asks Him whether it is to be a boy or a girl, wretched or fortunate, how long it will live, how it will spend its life and when it will die. The angel is given information on all these matters then and there. (Ibn Kathīr) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has also interpreted the words (مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَ غَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ) in a similar manner. (Qurṭubī)

مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَّغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ (shaped or unshaped - 22:5). It is evident from the *ḥadīth* referred to above that the human seed which completes its full term in the womb and is destined to be born as a normal human being is meant by مخلّقه (shaped), whereas a seed which is destined to be aborted is غيرمخلّقه (unshaped). However, there are other commentators who have explained these two words differently. According to them a foetus which completes all the stages of growth and development and whose limbs and other organs of the body are healthy, normal and proportionate is مُخَلَّقه (shaped). On the other hand, a foetus whose limbs are deformed or disproportionate is غَيرِمُخَلَّقه (unshaped). The latter interpretation is close to the translation adopted above. Allah knows best.

ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلاً (Then We bring you out as babies - 22:5) Then Allah brings forth the baby from its mother's womb as a totally helpless thing. Its body is weak and so are its other faculties, such as hearing, vision, senses, brain function, and overall physical movements including its grasp. All theses faculties grow strong as time passes until they reach their full capability. This is the meaning of the words ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوٓا اَشُدَّكُمْ. (Then [We nourish you] so that you reach your maturity - 22:5). The word *Ashudd* اَشُد is the plural of *shiddah* شِدَّة, just as An'um اَنْعُمْ is the plural of Ni'mah نِعْمَه. The meanings of these words are that the process of gradual development continues until all the faculties reach their peak and this happens when a person is in the prime of his youth.

اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ (The worst part of the age - 22:5). It means the stage of life when human faculties and senses begin to degenerate. The Holy Prophet

ﷺ had sought Allah's protection from such life. Nasa'ī has quoted Sayyidnā Sa'd رضي الله عنه as saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to repeat the following prayer very frequently. (Qurṭubī)

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیۡٓ اَعُوۡذُبِكَ مِنَ الۡبُخۡلِ وَاَعُوۡذُبِكَ مِنَ الۡجُبۡنِ وَاَعُوۡذُبِكَ مِنۡ اَنۡ اُرَدَّ اِلٰی اَرۡذَلِ الۡعُمُرِ وَاَعُوۡذُبِكَ مِنۡ فِتۡنَةِ الدُّنۡيَا وَعَذَابِ الۡقَبۡرِ

(O Allah! I seek Your protection from miserliness, and I seek Your protection from cowardice, and I seek Your protection from that I am carried to the age of helplessness, and I seek Your protection from the seductions of this world and the chastisement of the grave.)

An account of the different stages of human life after birth

Musnād of Aḥmad and Musnād of Abū Ya'lā quote Sayyidnā 'Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said "The good deeds of a minor child are recorded in the account of his father or both his parents, but his evil deeds are not recorded, neither in his parents' account nor in his own. After he has attained majority, an account is opened in his own name and the two angels who are attached to him are commanded to afford him protection and provide him strength. When he reaches the age of forty years and is still a Muslim, then Allah Ta'ālā grants him immunity from three diseases: insanity, leprosy and leucoderma. When he reaches the age of fifty years, Allah eases and abates his record. At the age of sixty, Allah Ta'ālā creates in him an urge to turn his thoughts towards Him. At seventy, all the inhabitants of the sky begin to love him. When he is eighty, Allah Ta'ālā records his good deeds but ignores his lapses. At ninety, Allah writes off all his sins, and grants him permission to intercede on behalf of his relatives and also accepts his intercession. He is then given the titles of امین اللہ (Allah's trustee) and اسیر اللہ فی الارض (that is the prisoner of Allah on earth, because at that age all his strength is gone, he loses interest in his surroundings and spends his life like a prisoner). And when he reaches the worst of age, then all the good deeds which he used to perform when he was strong and healthy continue to be recorded in his account while his sinful acts remain unrecorded."

Having reproduced this tradition from Musnād Abū Ya'lā, Ḥafiz Ibn Kathīr says:

هذا حديث غريب جدا وفيه نكارة شديدة

This *ḥadīth* is *gharīb* (i.e. reported by one narrator only), and is

extremely *munkar* (i.e. reported by a weak narrator against the authentic traditions).

He then adds:

ومع هٰذا قد رواه الامام احمد بن حنبل فی مسنده موقوفًا ومرفوعًا

(And in spite of all this Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal has related it in his Musnād both as a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and as a saying of a Ṣaḥābī, that is traced.

ثَانِىَ عِطْفِهٖ (Turning his side away - 22:5) The word *'iṭf* means 'side of the body', and the expression means 'to turn on one's side' - in other words 'to oppose'.

Verses 11 - 13

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى حَرْفٍ ۚ فَاِنْ اَصَابَهٗ خَيْرُ ِاطْمَاَنَّ بِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ اَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ِانْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖ ۚ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةَ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿۱۱﴾ يَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَالَا يَضُرُّهٗ وَمَا لَايَنْفَعُهٗ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ الْبَعِيْدُ ﴿۱۲﴾ يَدْعُوْا لَمَنْ ضَرُّهٗٓ اَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهٖ ؕ لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلٰى وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيْرُ ﴿۱۳﴾

And among men there is one who worships Allah (standing) on the verge: so if some good thing happens to him, he is satisfied with it, and if a trial befalls upon him, he turns his face back. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the loss which is so obvious. [11] **He prays to someone, instead of Allah, who can neither harm him nor benefit him. That is the error which takes him too far (from the right path).** [12] **He, rather, prays to someone whose harm is more likely than his benefit. Wretched is such a patron and wretched is such a companion.** [13]

Commentary

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى حَرْفٍ (And among men there is one who worships Allah (standing) on the verge - 22:11.) Bukhārī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have related from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ

migrated to Madīnah, people flocked to him and accepted the new religion. But there were some among them whose conversion to Islam was far from being genuine, and whose sole motive for their action was to seek self-advancement, and they lacked conviction. If, after becoming Muslims, favorable circumstances resulted in an increase in their prosperity and their children, they thought Islam was a very good religion, but they were equally ready to condemn it if things went against their personal interests. This verse was revealed to describe such people who were mere opportunists and were easily swayed either way depending on where their selfish interests lay.

Verses 14 - 16

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَّنْ يَّنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَآءِ ثُمَّ لْيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدُهٗ مَا يَغِيظُ ﴿١٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ أَنْزَلْنٰهُ اٰيٰتٍ بَيِّنٰتٍ ۙ وَّأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَنْ يُّرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾

Surely, Allah will admit those who believe and do good deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow. Surely Allah does what He intends. [14]

If someone thinks that Allah will never help him (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) in this world and in the Hereafter, he should stretch a rope to the sky, then cut (Allah's communication) off (from the prophet) and see whether his effort can really remove what irritates (him). [15]

And this is how We have sent it (the Qur'ān) down as clear signs, and (the fact is) that Allah takes whom He wills to the right path. [16]

Commentary

مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ (If someone thinks - 22:15). It means that the enemies of Islam who put hurdles in its path and desired that Allah should abandon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his religion must clearly understand that this

can happen only when, God forbid, he is deprived of the office of the prophethood and ceases to receive *waḥy* (revelations) from Allah Ta'ālā. It is well understood that when Allah Ta'ālā bestows the prophethood on someone and also favours him with *waḥy* (revelations), He also promises him full support in this world and in the Hereafter. Thus the only way to stop the advancement of a prophet and his mission, if someone has the power to stop it, is that he should dispossess the Holy Prophet ﷺ of his mission or that the sequence of Divine revelation should be severed. Anyone wanting to do all this will have to go up to the sky and cut off the chain of revelation, and since such a thing is not possible, no amount of fire and fury can do any harm to Islām. This interpretation is related in al-Durr al-Manthūr from Ibn Zaid and, in my opinion, it is the most appropriate one.

Qurṭubī also thinks that this is the best interpretation of this verse. There are some others who are of the view that the word سماء (sky) occurring in this verse means the ceiling of one's house and the verse means that a person who entertains hostile feelings towards Islām and the Holy Prophet ﷺ must realize that he can do them no harm. Hence the best thing for him to do is to hang himself from the ceiling out of sheer mortification. (Maẓharī and others).

Verses 17 - 18

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالْمَجُوسَ
وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ
وَالدَّوَابُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُهِنِ
اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُكْرِمٍ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۩ ﴿١٨﴾ السجدة

As for those who believe and the Jews and the Sabians and the Christians and the Magians and those who ascribe partners to Allah, Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment. Surely Allah is witness

to every thing. [17]

Have you not seen that to Allah prostrate all those in the skies and all those on the earth, and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the animals and many from mankind? And there are many on whom punishment has become due. And the one whom Allah puts to disgrace, there is none to give him respect. Surely Allah does what He wills. [18]

Commentary

In verse 17 it is stated that Allah will decide among the believers and non-believers of different faiths on the Day of Resurrection, because He knows everything. What that decision would be, has been related in the Qur'ān at several places, namely that the good Muslims will enjoy a life of everlasting peace and comfort, while the infidels would be condemned to a life of eternal perdition. In the next verse, by using the word "Sajdah" (prostration), it has been declared that all created things, be they living things, minerals or plants, are in obedience and thus submit to the Supreme authority of Allah Ta'ālā, thereby mentioning two groups of humans in this respect of 'submission'. One, which obeys Allah and therefore is included amongst the creatures who 'prostrate' to Him, and the other one which is rebellious and refuses to bow before Him, meaning, refusing to submit to His Will. The word "Sajdah" (prostration) has been used here in the broader sense of 'submission' to the will of Allah and obeying His commands, because all created things act upon this submission in their own way. Human beings perform Sajdah by touching the ground with the forehead, while in the case of other created things their Sajdah constitutes their faithful performance of the functions assigned to them by Allah.

The truth about all created things obeying Allah

Genetically, the entire universe and all created things therein are under the control and subject to the Will of their Creator by virtue of an inherently programmed guidance (guidance of Takwīn) by Allah. The 'submission' in this sense is pre-determined, involuntary and instinctive. There is no created being which can escape this universal law of creation, be it a Muslim or a non-believer, a living thing or dead, mineral or plant. The smallest particle and the highest mountain cannot make the slightest movement without His Will. There is, however, another kind of

submission to Allah, when a person offers homage to Him voluntarily and without constraint. This is what distinguishes a believer from a non-believer. A believer is obedient and sincere in his submission to Allah, whereas a non-believer repudiates His existence. As this verse deals with the difference between a Muslim and a Kāfir (infidel), it is more likely that reference to 'Sajdah' (prostration) does not refer to pre-destined and instinctive obedience alone but covers the voluntary submission as well. Let it not be supposed that only human beings and Jinns who possess intelligence can offer voluntary and unconstrained submission, and animals, plants and minerals being devoid of reason cannot exercise voluntary and intentional obedience. Indeed it can be proved from the text of the Qur'ān that every created thing has reason, intellect and intent, and the difference lies only in degree. Human beings and Jinns possess a perfect level of intelligence, which makes them liable to a strict adherence to the laws governing what is permissible and what is forbidden. As regards other creatures, Allah has given them intelligence according to their needs. Animals possess the highest degree of intelligence after humans, then come plants and last of all are the minerals. The intelligence among the animals can easily be perceived, and that possessed by plants can also be observed if one applies one's mind to the task. However, the intelligence given to the minerals is so little and concealed that it is not easily discernible, though Allah has said clearly that they not only possess intelligence but also have the capacity to decide things. The Qur'ān says about the sky and the earth قَالَتَا اَتَيْنَا طَائِعِيْنَ (They said, "We come willingly."41:11) that is, when Allah commanded the sky and the earth that they must submit to His Will either by their free choice or by force, they both replied that they accepted His authority by their own voluntary choice. At another place the Qur'ān says وَاِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ, (and there are still others which fall down in fear of Allah. - 2:74) which means that there are rocks, which fall down in fear of Allah Ta'ālā. Similarly, there are numerous traditions which provide evidence of mountains conversing with one another, or other created things showing signs of intelligence. Therefore, the homage mentioned in this verse for which the word Sajdah (Prostration) has been used means the voluntary homage. The interpretation of this verse would, then, be that except for the human beings and Jinns all other created things voluntarily and willingly submit to the Divine Authority. It is only the human beings and

Jinns who are divided into two factions, namely those who bow in submission to the Will of Allah, and those who deny His authority and refuse to submit to Him and are, therefore, despised. Allah knows best.

Verses 19 - 24

هٰذٰنِ خَصۡمٰنِ اخۡتَصَمُوۡا فِیۡ رَبِّهِمۡ ۫ فَالَّذِیۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا قُطِّعَتۡ لَهُمۡ ثِیَابٌ مِّنۡ نَّارٍ ؕ یُصَبُّ مِنۡ فَوۡقِ رُءُوۡسِهِمُ الۡحَمِیۡمُ ﴿۱۹﴾ یُصۡهَرُ بِهٖ مَا فِیۡ بُطُوۡنِهِمۡ وَالۡجُلُوۡدُ ﴿۲۰﴾ وَلَهُمۡ مَّقَامِعُ مِنۡ حَدِیۡدٍ ﴿۲۱﴾ كُلَّمَاۤ اَرَادُوۡۤا اَنۡ یَّخۡرُجُوۡا مِنۡهَا مِنۡ غَمٍّ اُعِیۡدُوۡا فِیۡهَا ٭ وَذُوۡقُوۡا عَذَابَ الۡحَرِیۡقِ ﴿۲۲﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ یُدۡخِلُ الَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجۡرِیۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِهَا الۡاَنۡهٰرُ یُحَلَّوۡنَ فِیۡهَا مِنۡ اَسَاوِرَ مِنۡ ذَهَبٍ وَّلُؤۡلُؤًا ؕ وَلِبَاسُهُمۡ فِیۡهَا حَرِیۡرٌ ﴿۲۳﴾ وَهُدُوۡۤا اِلَی الطَّیِّبِ مِنَ الۡقَوۡلِ ۚۖ وَهُدُوۡۤا اِلٰی صِرَاطِ الۡحَمِیۡدِ ﴿۲۴﴾

These are two opponents who have disputed about their Lord. Now, for those who disbelieve, garments from fire shall be tailored, and boiling water shall be poured from over their heads [19] **whereby everything in their bellies, as well as the skins, will be melted.** [20] **And for them there are hooked rods of iron.** [21] **Whenever, in their anguish, they will intend to come out of it (the fire), they will be turned back to it and (it will be said to them,) "Taste the punishment of burning".** [22]

Surely Allah will admit those who believe and do good deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and with pearls. And their dress therein will be (of) silk. [23] **And guided they were to the good word (of faith) and guided they were to the path of the Praised One.** [24]

Commentary

هٰذٰنِ خَصۡمٰنِ اخۡتَصَمُوۡا (These are two opponents who have disputed about

their Lord - 22:19). This verse, with its general words, deals with two sets of people, namely the Muslims and the infidels whether they belong to the earliest times or to later ages. However, the particular event in the background of which it was revealed about two groups of men who faced each other in combat on the battleground of Badr. Sayyidnā 'Ali, Ḥamzah and 'Ubaidah ﷺ stepped out of the Muslim ranks, whereas 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah, his son Walīd and his brother Shaibah came out to challenge them. In the ensuing fight the three unbelievers were slain, Sayyidnā 'Ali and Ḥamzah ﷺ emerged unscathed, while Sayyidnā 'Ubaidah ﷺ was mortally wounded and expired at the feet of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The revelation of this verse in relation to these warriors of the field of Badr is well established on the authority of traditions contained in Bukhārī and Muslim, but it is evident that its message is not exclusive for them alone, but embraces the entire Muslim community of all times and ages.

The philosophy of adorning the dwellers of Paradise with gold bracelets

Here a point may arise that bracelets are articles of jewellery worn by women only and their use by men is looked upon with disfavor. This objection is not entirely relevant because throughout ages monarchs have embellished their persons with costly jewellery, crowns and bracelets as symbols of their might and wealth. The story is well known that Surāqah Ibn Mālik, before his conversion to Islam, started out in pursuit of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in order to apprehend him while he was on his way from Makkah to Madīnah. As he approached near the Holy Prophet ﷺ his horse sank, by Allah's Will, in a piece of treacherous sand. At that critical moment he expressed his repentance about his error and sinful way, and begged the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pray for his deliverance from his predicament. When, as a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prayer, his horse was extracted from the quicksand, he ﷺ promised Surāqah Ibn Mālik ﷺ that when the bracelets of the King of Persia would fall in the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war, they would be given to him. So, when during the caliphate of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ the Muslims conquered Persia and the bracelets worn by the King of Persia were brought to Madīnah along with other spoils of war Surāqah Ibn Mālik ﷺ laid claim to them and received them from Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. In brief, just as wearing a crown is a royal privilege and not a common practice among men,

similarly wearing bracelets by men is a royal privilege, and thus the men admitted to heaven will wear them as a symbol of honour and Divine favour. According to this verse, and also Sūrah Fāṭir, the bracelets will be made of gold, but in Sūrah Nisā' it is said that they will be made of silver. For this reason commentators are of the view that the bracelets worn by the pious people in heaven will be of three kinds, that is made of gold, silver and pearls. This verse makes a mention of bracelets made of pearls also.

Silk clothes are forbidden for men

The verse says that those people who are admitted to Paradise will wear silk clothes which means that their dresses, carpets, curtains etc. will be made of silk, which is regarded as the best fabric in this world. However, it should be understood that the silk used in Paradise and the silk used in this world have only the name in common, otherwise from the point of view of quality there is no comparison between the two.

Imām Nasa'ī, Bazzār and Baihaqī have related on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the clothes of the people living in Paradise will be made from silk, which will be extracted from a fruit growing there. There is also a statement by Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ that there would be a tree in the Paradise which would produce silk and the people of Paradise would wear dresses made from it. (Maẓharī)

In a *ḥadīth* quoted by Imām Nasa'ī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said:

من لبس الحرير فى الدّنيا لم يلبسه فى الاٰخرة، ومن شرب الخمر فى الدّنيا لم يشربها فى الاخرة، ومن شرب فى انية الذّهب و الفضّة لم يشرب فيها فى الاٰخرة، ثم قال رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم لباس اهل الجنّة وشراب اهل الجنّة وانية اهل الجنّة

"He who wears silk in this world will not wear it in the Hereafter; he who drinks wine in this world will be deprived of the sacred nectar in the Hereafter; he who uses utensils made of precious metals for food and drink in this world will be denied their use in the Hereafter." Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ added " These three things are exclusively for the people of Paradise." (Qurṭubī quoting Nasa'ī)

The meaning is that a person who spent his life in this world in the midst of these three luxuries and did not show contrition, would be deprived of them even if he were admitted to Paradise. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that a person who drank wine in this world and did not repent would be deprived of the sacred nectar of the Paradise in the Hereafter. (Qurṭubī)

According to Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ there is another *ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

من لبس الحرير فى الدّنيا لم يلبسه فى الاٰخرة وان دخل الجنّة، لبسه اهل الجنّة ولم يلبسه هو (رواه ابو داؤدَ الطيالسى فى مسنده وقال القرطبى اسناده صحيح)

"He who wore silk in the world will not wear it in the Hereafter even if he is admitted to Paradise. All other people of Paradise will wear silk, but not he."

Here a point arises that if after admittance to Paradise a person remained deprived of something, he will nourish a sense of sorrow and grief, whereas Paradise is no place for such feelings, because every one who is admitted to Paradise should at all times be easy in his mind and free from anxiety. On the other hand, if the deprivation of certain facilities causes no sorrow and grief, then the deprivation loses its purpose. Qurṭubī has given a very convincing explanation to this matter. He says that the people of Paradise will be given different grades and places at different levels, depending on how well they stood in Allah's favour on account of their good deeds and devotion to the cause of the True Faith. Everybody will be aware of these differences, but Allah will fill their hearts with tranquility and contentment, so that they will not feel grief and sorrow about these differences. واللّٰه سبحانه' وتعالٰى اعلم

وَهُدُوْٓا اِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ (And guided they were to the good word (of faith) - 22:24) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that this refers to the Kalimah *ṭayyibah* لا اله الاّ اللّٰه . Some others say that it means Qur'ān. (Qurṭubī) As a matter of fact it includes all these things in its meaning.

Verse 25

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَيَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِىْ جَعَلْنٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَآءَ نِ الْعَاكِفُ فِيْهِ وَالْبَادِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّرِدْ فِيْهِ بِاِلْحَادٍ ۢ

بِظُلْمٍ نُّذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

Surely (We will punish) those who disbelieve and prevent (people) from the way of Allah and from Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām (the Sacred Mosque) which We have made for all men, where residents and visitors are all equal. And whoever intends therein to commit deviation with injustice, We will make him taste a painful punishment. [25]

Commentary

In the previous verse, mention was made of the mutual hostility between the believers and infidels. One aspect of this hostility has been described in this verse, namely that among the infidels there are those who not only persist in error themselves but also prevent others from following the path of virtue. Those were the people who prevented the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions when they wanted to enter the Sacred Mosque wearing the pilgrim's garb. Traditionally the Sacred Mosque and that part of Makkah which has an essential role in the rituals of the pilgrimage was not their property and they had no right to deny entry to any one. The place is open to every one, whether a local resident or a visitor. The verse goes on to say that anyone who commits an impious act in the Sacred Mosque, (meaning the whole of Ḥaram), such as preventing people from entering the Mosque, will be made to suffer severe chastisement from Allah, specially if he is also a polytheist as was the case with the infidels of Makkah. They will be liable for double punishment, one for being non-believers and second for preventing others to enter the Sacred Mosque for pilgrimage. Although all sinful acts especially *shirk* and *kufr* are forbidden and are great crimes and sins which are liable to punishment at all times and in all places, but such acts carried out in the *ḥaram* enhance the crime double-fold, and hence referred here for their special importance.

يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ (Prevent (people) from the way of Allah - 22:25) The words سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ (the way of Allah) mean Islam and the sense of the verse is that these people not only repudiate Islam themselves but also prevent others from accepting it.

Their second offence is that they stop the Muslims from entering the Sacred Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām) (22:25). In reality Al-Masjid

Al-Ḥarām is the name of the mosque which is built around بيت الله (House of Allah - the Holy Ka'ba), and it is a very important part of *ḥaram* of Makkah. However, the term Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām is usually used for the whole of *ḥaram* of Makkah, as is the case under this episode. Thus the infidels of Makkah excluded the Muslims not only from the Sacred Mosque but also from the precincts of *ḥaram* of Makkah (as is evident from numerous traditions), and the words الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرام used in this verse cover the entire *ḥaram*. The Holy Qur'ān has at another place used the word الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرام under this episode in the meaning of the whole area of *ḥaram*: وَصَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ. (48:25)

The meaning of equal rights of all Muslims within Ḥaram of Makkah

According to al-Durr al-Manthūr the term Al-Masjid Al-Ḥaram in the present context means the entire *ḥaram* as reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. The entire Muslim Ummah and all the jurists are unanimous on the fact that all those areas of Makkah and the *ḥaram* where the essential rituals of the pilgrimage are performed, such as the space between Ṣafā and Marwah, where the pilgrims perform *Sa'y*, and all the open areas of Minā, 'Arafāt and Muzdalifah are *waqf* for the benefit of the entire Muslim ummah and have never been, nor can ever be, owned by individuals. Some jurists apply this principle to the private houses in Makkah and the open lands in the area of *ḥaram* to infer that these too are *waqf* for all the Muslims, that a Muslim can stay anywhere he likes and that the sale or letting out these properties on rent is not permissible. However, there are other jurists who do not accept this view and believe that the ownership of these properties can vest in private individuals and the houses can be sold or let out on rent. It is well established that Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ purchased the house of Ṣafwān Ibn Umayyah in Makkah for use as prison for the criminals. As for Imām Abū Hanīfah, both views are attributed to him in different reports, but the *ḥanafī* jurists have issued their Fatwa (ruling) in favour of the latter view. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī) This verse mentions certain areas of ḥaram where entry was denied to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions by the infidels of Makkah, but these areas are *waqf* by consensus of ummah and nobody can be denied access to them.

وَمَنْ يُّرِدْ فِيْهِ بِاِلْحَادٍۭ بِظُلْمٍ (And whoever intends therein to commit deviation

with injustice - 22:25.) The word اِلْحَادٍ literally means deviation from the right path. While Mujāhid and Qatādah have interpreted this word to mean unbelief and denial of the Oneness of Allah (*kufr* and *shirk*) other commentators have given this word its literal meaning which embraces all kinds of sins so much so that even hurling abuses to one's servant is also included in it.

Sayyidnā 'Atā' ﷺ has further enlarged the scope of the meaning of this word by declaring that *ilḥād* within the precincts of *ḥaram* means entering it without wearing the pilgrims garb (*iḥram*), or violating any of the prohibition inside the *ḥaram*, such as hunting or cutting down trees within its limits. It needs to be clarified here that all things forbidden by the religious code are forbidden everywhere and will attract punishment wherever committed; and the specific reference to *ḥaram* in this verse is to emphasize the fact that just as a good deed performed within its limits will be generously rewarded, similarly a sin committed there will attract the most severe punishment. (Mujāhid). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ has related another interpretation of the word *ilḥād* to mean that whereas at any other place the mere intention to commit a sin does not constitute a sin unless it is actually committed, within the limits of the *ḥaram* even the resolve to commit a sin is punishable, as if it has actually been committed. Qurṭubī has adopted this interpretation from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ and lends his own support to it. Whenever Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ went for the pilgrimage, he used to set up two tents – one within the limits of *ḥaram* and the other outside it. If ever an occasion arose when he needed to scold or rebuke any one of his households, he would do it in the tent which he had set up outside the limits of *ḥaram*. When people asked him the reason for this, his answer was that the words کلاّ واللہ or بلی واللہ which a person normally uses when angry also constitute إلحاد فی الحرم (committing an act of sin within the precincts of *ḥaram*). (Maẓharī)

Verses 26 - 29

وَاِذْ بَوَّاْنَا لِاِبْرٰهِيْمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ اَنْ لَّا تُشْرِكْ بِىْ شَيْـًٔا وَّ طَهِّرْ بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِيْنَ وَالْقَآئِمِيْنَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُوْدِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَ اَذِّنْ فِى النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَاْتُوْكَ رِجَالًا وَّعَلٰى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَّاْتِيْنَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيْقٍ

﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِيٓ أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومٰتٍ عَلٰى مَارَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَآئِسَ الْفَقِيرَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And (remember) when We pointed out for Ibrāhīm the place of the House (of Allah) saying, "Do not associate anything with Me as My partner and purify My House for those who make *ṭawāf* (circumambulation around it), and those who perform Qiyām (standing up in worship) and those who perform Rukū' (bowing down) and Sujūd (prostration), [26] **and announce among people about (the obligation of) Ḥajj, so that they should come to you on foot and on every camel turned lean, travelling through every distant hilly pathway,** [27] **so that they witness benefits for them and recite Allah's name, in specified days, over the provision He gave them from the cattle - 'So, eat thereof and feed the distressed, the poor.'** [28] **Then, they must remove their dirt and fulfill their vows and make *ṭawāf* of the Ancient House."** [29]

Commentary

The previous verse contains a warning of severe punishment to the infidels who prevented the Muslims from entering the Sacred Mosque and the precincts of *ḥaram*. This verse describes the eminence and the superior status of the Baitullah which magnifies manifold the evil of their deeds.

The start of founding the structure of the House of Allah (the Holy Ka'ba)

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرٰهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ (And [remember] when We pointed out for Ibrāhīm the place of the House - 22:26.) The word بوّء literally means 'to assign to someone a place for his residence.' The verse calls to attention the fact that Allah assigned to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام a place where Baitullah was located. There is a hint here that he was not settled there already, since he migrated here from Syria. And a reference to مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ (the place of the House) suggests that the House of Allah pre-existed the

arrival of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام , because according to reliable traditions its first foundations were laid about the time when Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was sent upon the earth and he, and the prophets who came after him, used to make *ṭawāf* (circumambulation) around it. At the time of Deluge in the days of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام its upper-structure was removed but the foundations remained intact. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was brought to this place and commanded by Allah Ta'ālā أَنْ لَّا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا (Do not associate with Me any one - 22:26). It is quite evident that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام could not commit *shirk,* because he had himself suffered considerable torment at the hands of polytheists after they accused him of having destroyed their idols. The intention here is to warn the people at large against the great sin of polytheism. The second command was وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ (purify My House - 22:26), even though the House of Allah did not exist at that time. But the fact of the matter is that Baitullah is not just a structure of bricks and mortar, rather the term encompasses that entire piece of sacred land where Baitullah once stood and whose structure Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was now commanded to raise once again on the original foundations. As for the command to purify the place, Qurṭubī says that in those days the tribes of Jurhum (جُرهم) and Amalakites (عمالقه) had placed idols there, which they worshipped. (Qurṭubī). Another view is that this command is for the future generations not only to keep the place free from infidelity and polytheism but also to pay special attention to its external cleanliness and purity.

The third command given to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was أَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ (Announce among people about the obligation of Ḥajj - 22:27). Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that when Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded by Allah to make this proclamation, he submitted that the place where he stood was an uninhabited desolate plane with nobody to hear the proclamation whereas he lacked the means to convey it to the populated areas. Allah Ta'ālā then told him that he was required only to make the proclamation and the responsibility for conveying it to the four corners of the world rested with Himself, that is Allah Ta'ālā. Thereupon Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام stood at مقام ابراهيم (Station of Ibrāhīm) and made the proclamation and Allah Ta'ālā magnified his voice so that it was heard all round the earth. It is also related that he made the proclamation from the top of the mount Abū Qubais (جبل أبی

قبيس). He put his fingers in his ears, turned his face in four directions and called out "O people! Allah has established His House and made it obligatory upon you to make pilgrimage to it. So obey the command of your Lord."

It is also mentioned in this narration that Allah Ta'ālā so decreed that the announcement was heard miraculously all over the world, not only by the people living then , but also by all those yet to be born upto the Day of Resurrection. And all those who are destined to perform the pilgrimage responded to the call with the words لَبَّيْكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ . Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that the Talbiyah during the pilgrimage has its origin in this response to the call of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. (Qurṭubī, Maẓharī)

Further on, the verse describes the tradition which has been established for all times as a result of the proclamation of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام namely يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالاً وَّعَلٰى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَّأْتِيْنَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيْقٍ (22:28) meaning that people will come to Baitullah from the four corners of the earth, some on foot and others on their mounts, which will become lean because of the long distances traversed by them. From that remote time until today, though thousands of years have elapsed, people come to Baitullah to perform pilgrimage, just as they did in the earliest times. All the prophets who came after Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and their followers strictly observed this tradition. During the long period of ignorance after Sayyidnā 'Īsā' عليه السلام , the Arabs, even though they lapsed into the evils of idolatry, yet they continued to perform very faithfully all the rituals of the pilgrimage precisely as they had inherited them from the time of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام .

لِيَشْهَدُوْا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ (So that they witness benefits for them - 22:28) means that the arduous journey undertaken by people to perform pilgrimage is to their own advantage. The use of the word "benefits" as a common noun (without definite article) points to the universal benefits that may be derived from the pilgrimage. Apart from the spiritual rewards, many material profits may also be obtained. It is indeed remarkable that people who sedulously save pennies over long years in order to be able to defray the high expenses involved in performing the Ḥajj have never become insolvent, whereas many people are known to have become bankrupt as a result of expenses incurred on marriages or on the construction of palatial houses. It is a common knowledge that no one has become a pauper

because of spending on Ḥajj or 'Umrah, rather it has been noticed, according to some narrations, that Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed such a blessing in this worship that many have gained materially after the ritual. As for the spiritual gains, they are many, one being related by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ in a *ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that anyone who performed Ḥajj in order to gain Allah's favour and avoided sins and obscene acts will return as immaculate and innocent as a newborn baby. (Bukhārī and Muslim) (Maẓharī).

In addition to the spiritual and material benefits to be obtained from Ḥajj mentioned above, there is yet another advantage which may be gained when performing it, which is mentioned in the following sentence: وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِيٓ أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومٰتٍ عَلٰى مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنۢ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ (so that they may recite Allah's name, in specified days, over the provision He gave them from the cattle - 22:28). Here it is important to bear in mind that the main object of sacrificing the animals on this occasion is not their meat, but the mention of Allah's name which is recited while the animal is being slaughtered, which is the essence of the worship. The fact that eating the meat of these animals has been made *ḥalāl* (lawful) for them is an additional reward from Allah. أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ (specified days) refer to the 10th, 11th, and 12th days of the month of Dhul-Ḥijjah when animals may be sacrificed. The words على مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنۢ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ (Over the provision He gave them from the cattle - 22:28) are of general application and include all kinds of sacrifices whether they are obligatory or optional.

فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا (So eat therefrom) Although the word كُلُوا has been used in the imperative mood, it does not mean that eating the meat of these animals is obligatory. Rather, it has been used in the sense that it is permitted and lawful to eat this meat, as it is mentioned in verse وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا (When you are out of *Iḥrām*, you may hunt - 5:2) for granting permission for hunting.

Ruling

Specially during the period of Ḥajj, and generally at other times too situations arise when animals must be sacrificed in Makkah . There is one kind of sacrifice which is obligatory and performed to expiate a sin such as killing animals within the precincts of *Ḥaram*. Books of jurisprudence describe in detail the kind of animals killed and the type of animals to be slaughtered to atone for each such animal killed unlawfully. Similarly, if

a person commits an act which is forbidden, as long as he is in the state of *iḥrām*, he too must slaughter an animal. Jurists call this kind of sacrifice as دم الجناية (sacrifice to atone for a sin). Here also there are specific rules governing each situation. T' ..re are certain irregularities which must be expiated by slaughtering a camel or a cow, while in other cases the sacrifice of a goat or sheep is considered sufficient. There are a third kind of irregularities where slaughter of an animal is not necessary, and one can redeem his error by offering *ṣadaqah*. This is not the place to discuss these matters in great detail, but the the necessary information on this subject can be found in my booklet Aḥkāmul-Ḥajj (احكام الحج). When an animal is slaughtered for expiating a sin or an irregular act, its meat can be eaten only by the poor and needy persons and it is not permissible for the person making the slaughter or any rich person to eat this meat, and this view is held by all the jurists. As regards other sacrifices, whether obligatory or voluntary, the person offering the sacrifice, his relatives and friends, even though they may be rich, can eat their meat; and the present verse refers to this kind of sacrifice. Here also it is recommended that one-third of the meat be distributed among the poor and needy. The second part of this verse وَاَطْعِمُوا الْبَآئِسَ الْفَقِيْرَ (and feed the distressed, the poor - 22:28) explains this point.

ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوْا تَفَثَهُمْ (Then, they must remove their dirt - 22:29) The word تَفَث means dirt, which gathers on human body. While a person is in the state of *iḥrām,* he cannot shave, trim or pluck his hair, nor can he pare his nails, nor use perfume, and it is quite natural that dirt should collect under his hair and nails and on his body. This verse requires of the pilgrims that after they have performed the sacrifice, they should remove this dirt, meaning thereby that they should now remove the *iḥrām*, (and wear their normal clothes) shave their heads and pare their nails. This verse mentions sacrifice first and then refers to the removal of the dirt, which suggests that these two acts must be performed in that order. It is forbidden to shave one's head or pare nails before the obligatory sacrifice. Anyone who does so must slaughter an animal as *dam* (to atone for his sin).

Observance of the correct sequence in the performance of various acts related to Ḥajj

The observance of various functions of Ḥajj in the same order in

which they are mentioned in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, and which have been codified by the jurists is, by consensus, a *sunnah*. However, opinions differ whether it is obligatory as well. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Mālik hold the view that the observance of the sequence is obligatory and any deviation from it must be atoned for by *dam*, while according to Imām Shafi'i it is only *sunnah* and a deviation from it reduces the reward to be gained by performing Ḥajj but does not make it obligatory to sacrifice an animal. There is also a ruling of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ من قدّم شيئًا من نسكه اواخّره فليهرق دما (He who alters the sequence of the rites during Ḥajj must slaughter an animal). (Maẓharī) Ṭaḥāwī has also reported this tradition through different versions. In addition Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ, Qatādah, Nakha'i and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī also support the view that any alteration in the sequence of the rites of Ḥajj makes the sacrifice of an animal obligatory. Fuller details on the subject are discussed in the Tafsīr Maẓharī.

وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ (And fulfill their vows - 22:29) نُذُور is the plural of the word نَذَر, which means a 'vow'. When a person commits himself verbally to do an act, in order to win the goodwill of Allah Ta'ālā, (which is not otherwise obligatory on him) it becomes a vow (*nadhr*) and its performance becomes obligatory for him by consensus of Ummah, provided that the act itself is not sinful or forbidden. If a person makes a vow to do something which is sinful, then he is not bound to fulfill the vow, rather it is impermissible to act upon it, but he must make atonement for the unfulfilled vow. According to Abū Ḥanīfah and other religious jurists the vow must be of an act which is an act of a direct worship (*'ibādah maqṣūdah*) in some manner. So, if someone makes a *nadhr* (vow) for voluntary prayers, fasting, *ṣadaqah*, sacrifice of animals etc. all these vows must be fulfilled in all circumstances. The present verse emphasizes on this very issue.

Ruling

It must be remembered that a resolve made in one's heart to do something does not become a *nadhr* (vow) unless it is pronounced with the tongue. Tafsīr Maẓharī has elaborated the rules of *nadhr* in great detail.

A question and its answer

One may question the relevance of *nadhr* in the context of Ḥajj. Obviously the preceding sentences speak of the rules of Ḥajj, like sacrifice, removing *iḥrām* etc. Similarly, the following sentence relates to the ṭawāf of *ziyārah*. Why the injunction to fulfill vows has been inserted between the rules of Ḥajj, while the rules governing vows have an independent status which are to be fulfilled at all times and at every place and not during Ḥajj only?

A possible explanation for this is that when a person sets out with the intention of performing Ḥajj, his heart prompts him to do the maximum number of good deeds and to spend the maximum time in prayers, and so he makes many vows, specially it was a common practice to make vows for sacrificing additional animals during Ḥajj. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ the word *nadhr* in this context means a vow to sacrifice an animal. One relevance of *nadhr* (vow) appearing with the rites of pilgrimage is that just as vow makes many things obligatory which are not so otherwise and makes many things unlawful for him which are not originally forbidden, similarly the state of *iḥrām*, during a pilgrimage makes certain things unlawful for him which are permitted at other times. Instances of these are: wearing stitched clothes, use of perfume, shaving of hair or paring nails. Therefore, Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah ﷺ has interpreted *nadhr* in this verse to mean those acts and duties which have become obligatory during the course of Ḥajj.

وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ (And they should make tawaf of the ancient House - 22:29) Here the word *ṭawāf* refers to *ṭawāf-uz-ziyārah*, which is performed on the 10th day of the month of Zil Hijj after casting stones and making the sacrifice. It is the second obligatory ritual of Ḥajj, the first being *wuqūf-ul-'Arafāt,* which is performed earlier. After this *ṭawāf* the state of *iḥrām* is fully terminated and all restrictions are removed. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

The word اَلْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ lexically means 'liberated house' Baitullah is called اَلْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ , because according to the Holy Prophet ﷺ it has been liberated from the control and domination of the infidels and tyrants and it will never again be ruled by them. (رواه الترمذی وحسنه والحاکم وصححه وابن جریر والطبرانی وغیرهم -Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). It is evident by the episode of the People of

Elephant who, with all their might, were frustrated in their attempt to establish their dominion over Makkah.[1]

Verses 30 - 33

ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّعَظِّمْ حُرُمٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ ؕ وَاُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ الْاَنْعَامُ اِلَّا مَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْاَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوْا قَوْلَ الزُّوْرِ ﴿٣٠﴾ حُنَفَآءَ لِلّٰهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِيْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ فَكَاَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ اَوْ تَهْوِيْ بِهِ الرِّيْحُ فِيْ مَكَانٍ سَحِيْقٍ ﴿٣١﴾ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّعَظِّمْ شَعَآئِرَ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوْبِ ﴿٣٢﴾ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَآ اِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيْقِ ﴿٣٣﴾

That is (what one should remember), and whoever observes the reverence of things sanctified by Allah, it is good for him with his Lord. And permitted to you are the cattle, except those mentioned to you through recitation (of the verses). So refrain from the filth of the idols and refrain from a word of falsehood, [30] **being upright for (the obedience of) Allah, not ascribing any partner to Him. And whoever ascribes a partner to Allah, it is as if he falls down from the sky and the birds snatch him, or the wind drives him away to a far off place.** [31]

That is (what one should remember), and if one observes the sanctity of the symbols of Allah, then such things emanate from the piety of the hearts. [32]

And for you there are benefits in them (the cattle) upto a specified time. Then their place of sacrifice is by the Ancient House. [33]

Commentary

حُرُمٰتِ اللّٰهِ (22:30) are the things sanctified by Allah Ta'ālā, that is the

1. The other meaning of the word عتيق is 'ancient' which is adopted in the translation of the text. (Editor)

religious laws. They are a source of welfare in this world and in the Hereafter for those pious Muslims who seek to learn them and act upon them.

أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ الْاَنْعَامُ اِلاَّ مَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ (And permitted to you are the cattle, except those mentioned to you through recitation (of the verses) - 22:30) The word انعام (cattle) includes camels, cows, goats, sheep etc. which are made lawful at all times and even when one is in the state of *iḥrām*. Then the verse contains an exception in the words اِلاَّ مَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ (except those mentioned to you.. - 22:30) These are the animals which have been made unlawful in all circumstances, whether one is in the state of *iḥrām* or not. The detail of these animals is given in other verses, such as carrion, an animal which is beaten to death, or slaughtered without reciting the name of Allah, or in the name of someone other than Allah.

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْاَوْثَانِ (So refrain from the filth of the idols - 22:30) The word رِجس means filth or moral impurity, and اَوْثَان is the plural of وَثَن , which means idol. Idols have been described as filth, because they fill a man's heart and soul with moral impurity.

وَاجْتَنِبُوْا قَوْلَ الزُّوْرِ (And refrain from a word of falsehood - 22:30) The phrase قَوْلَ الزُّوْرِ means lies. Anything which is contrary to truth is a lie and false, whether it is corrupt beliefs and practices or whether it is false evidence. The Holy Prophet ﷺ once said 'Among the major sins are associating anyone with Allah, disobedience of one's parents, giving false evidence and telling lies in general talk'. He used the phrase وَقَوْلَ الزُّوْرِ (word of falsehood) repeatedly. (Bukhārī)

وَمَنْ يُّعَظِّمْ شَعَآئِرَاللّٰهِ (And if one observes the sanctity of the symbols of Allah - 22:32) The word شَعَائِر is the plural of شَعِيْرَه which means a 'symbol', 'a distinctive sign', and refers to those things which are considered as the specific emblems of certain groups of people or certain faiths. شَعَائِر are those special laws which are generally taken to be the identifying features of a Muslim. Most of the rules of Ḥajj fall in this category.

فَاِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوْبِ (then such things emanate from the piety of the hearts - 22:32). It means that respect for the شَعَائِرُ اللّٰهِ (Symbols of Allah) is an evidence of the piety of heart, which indicates that the symbols of Allah are respected by the one who has *taqwā* (fear of Allah) in his heart and that *taqwā* is a quality which rests in one's heart. When the heart is

equipped with this quality, it is reflected in all his actions.

لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ اِلٰى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (And for you there are benefits in them upto a specified time - 22:33) It means that it is lawful for the Muslims to use the quadruped animals for their benefit (such as using their milk, riding them or using them for transport of goods) unless the animals have been made هَدِىْ (Hady) by reserving them for sacrifice to be offered within the precincts of *ḥaram.* When a person takes along with him an animal for the specific purpose of sacrificing it within *ḥaram*, the animal is described as *hady,* and no benefit may be derived from it, except in extreme emergency. A person leading a camel after it has been nominated as *hady* may lawfully ride it only if he is unable to walk and no other mount is available.

ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَآ اِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيْقِ (Then their place of sacrifice is by the Ancient House - 22:33) Here اَلْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيْقِ includes the entire precincts of *ḥaram*, as was the case in the previous verse where the word Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām was used for the entire area of *ḥaram*, and *maḥill* (place) means the place of slaughtering the animals of *hady*. Thus the entire *ḥaram* is declared as the slaughtering place of the animals of *hady*. The meaning of the verse is that the *hady* (animals nominated for sacrifice during Ḥajj) may be slaughtered within, and not outside the area of *ḥaram* which includes Minā and all other places of Makkah. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Verses 34 - 37

وَلِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِّيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللّٰهِ عَلٰى مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيْمَةِ الْاَنْعَامِ ط فَاِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَلَهٗٓ اَسْلِمُوْا ط وَ بَشِّرِالْمُخْبِتِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِرَاللّٰهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ وَالصّٰبِرِيْنَ عَلٰى مَآ اَصَابَهُمْ وَالْمُقِيْمِى الصَّلٰوةِ لا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنٰهَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ شَعَآئِرِ اللّٰهِ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا خَيْرٌ صلے ق فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَآفَّ ج فَاِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوْبُهَا فَكُلُوْا مِنْهَا وَاَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ ط كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرْنٰهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَنْ يَّنَالَ

اللّٰهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى مَا هَدٰىكُمْ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾

And for every Ummah We prescribed the act of sacrifice, so that they recite Allah's name over the provision He gave them from the cattle. So, your God is One God. Therefore, to Him alone you must submit. And give good news to those who turn to Him with humbleness - [34] those whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is remembered, and who observe patience against whatever befalls them, and who are steadfast in Ṣalāh, and who spend (in the way of Allah) out of what We have given to them. [35]

And the big animals of sacrifice (like camels) are made by Us among the symbols of Allah for you in which there is much good for your benefit. So recite the name of Allah over them as they are lined up (for sacrifice). Then, once their flanks fall down (after slaughter), eat of them and feed the one who is content and the one who wishes to receive. Thus We have made them (the animals) subjugated to you, so that you may be grateful. [36] **It is neither their flesh nor their blood that reaches Allah, but what reaches Him is the *taqwā* on your part. Thus He has made them (the animals) subjugated to you, so that you proclaim the glory of Allah for the guidance He gave you. And give good news to those who are good in deeds.** [37]

Commentary

وَلِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا (And for every Ummah We prescribed the act of sacrifice - 22:34) The words مَنْسَك and نُسُك means several things in Arabic such as sacrifice of animals, the rites of pilgrimage, and also worship of Allah Ta'ālā. This word has been used in the Qur'ān at several places and conveys one of the three meanings. In the present context, the word can carry all the three meanings. Mujāhid and some other commentators think that here the word مَنْسَك refers to the sacrifice of the animals in which case the verse would mean that the obligation to offer sacrifice, which has been placed on this Ummah is nothing new, because all the

other peoples were likewise bound to do so. On the other hand, according to Qatādah the word means the rites of the pilgrimage, and thus the verse would mean that these rites which have been prescribed for the present Ummah were made obligatory on the people of earlier ages also. Ibn 'Arafah has interpreted the word مَنْسَك to mean worship of Allah, and so the meaning of the verse would be that the worship of Allah was made obligatory on all the peoples of bygone ages and though there were differences in the forms of worship, yet in essence it remained unchanged.

وَ بَشِّرِالْمُخْبِتِيْنَ (And give good news to those who turn to Him in humbleness) The word خَبْت means 'a depressed tract of land' and خَبِيْت means 'a person who deems himself humble and lowly'. According to 'Amr bin Aws مُخْبِتِيْنَ are those people who do not wrong others and if somebody wrongs them, they do not seek revenge. Sufyān has observed that they are the people who are contented with Allah's will and remain agreeable in all circumstances, comfort or trouble and poverty or affluence.

وَجِلَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ (Whose hearts are filled with awe - 22:35) The word وَجِل means a feeling of awe inspired by something majestic and sublime. These words describe the state of pious people who are overwhelmed by deep awe whenever the name of Allah is mentioned in their presence.

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنٰهَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ شَعَآئِرِ اللّٰهِ (And the big animals of sacrifice [like camels] are made by Us among the symbols of Allah for you - 22:36.) It has been explained earlier that شَعَآئِر (symbols) mean those special forms of rites and worship, which are the symbols of Islam. Sacrifice of animals is one of them, which must be observed with due importance.

فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَآفَّ (So recite the name of Allah over them as they are lined up (for sacrifice) - 22:36) The word صَوَاف (translated above as 'lined up') is used for مَصْفُوْفَه , which means standing in a row. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ the verse means that the camel, which is to be slaughtered, should stand on three legs and one foreleg should be bent and tied up. This is a better way of slaughtering a camel and is according to *sunnah.* Other animals should be slaughtered in lying position, which is also *sunnah.*

فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوْبُهَا (Then, once their flanks fall down). Here the word وَجَبَتْ is used for the meaning of سَقَطَت, which means when the animal falls and dies.

الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ (the one who is content and the one who wishes to receive) In an earlier verse people who have a right on the meat of sacrificed animals have been described by the words بَائِس فَقِير , which mean destitute and without means. These two words have been clarified further by the words قَانِع and مُعْتَر . The word قَانِع applies to a needy person who does not solicit and is content with what people offer him voluntarily. While مُعْتَر is a person who goes to a place where he expects to receive something, whether he solicits verbally or not. (Mazharī)

The real object is not the specific rites of pilgrimage but true devotion to Allah and submission to His will which are inherent in those rites

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا (It is neither their flesh nor their blood that reaches Allah - 22:37) It means that the sacrifice of animals is a very high form of worship, but their meat and blood do not reach Allah Ta'ālā nor are these two things the real object of sacrifice. Its real aim is to recite the name of Allah and to comply with His commands with true devotion. This rule applies to all forms of worship. For instance, the object of prayers is not just the movement of limbs, or the object of fasting is not merely a denial of food and drink. The real purpose of these rites of worship is to obey the commands of Allah Ta'ālā with all sincerity. Devoid of sincerity these rites of worship are like a body without soul. Nevertheless these forms of worship are also very important because Allah Ta'ālā has prescribed these forms for different types of worship. Allah knows best. واللّٰه اعلم

Verse 38

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدٰفِعُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

Surely, Allah defends those who believe. Allah does not love any treacherous, ungrateful. [38]

Commentary

The previous verses contain an account of how the infidels of Makkah prevented the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions from entering the *Ḥaram* and the Holy Mosque to perform 'Umrah when, having put on *iḥrām*, they had reached as far as Ḥudaibiyah, a place not far from Makkah. In this verse Allah Ta'ālā consoled the Muslims with the promise that He would deprive the infidels of their power to harm them any more.

This incident took place in the year 6 A.H. and thereafter the power and the morale of the infidels suffered continuous decline until in the year 8 A.H. the Muslims conquered Makkah. The following verses describe this event in detail.

Verses 39 - 41

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ يُقٰتَلُوْنَ بِاَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوْا ؕ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيْرُ
﴿٣٩﴾ ۙ الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ؕ
وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللّٰهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ
وَّصَلَوٰتٌ وَّمَسٰجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيْهَا اسْمُ اللّٰهِ كَثِيْرًا ؕ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ
يَّنْصُرُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِىٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اِنْ مَّكَّنّٰهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ
اَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَمَرُوْا بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ؕ
وَلِلّٰهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿٤١﴾

Permission (to fight) is given to those who are fought against, because they have been wronged, and Allah is powerful enough to give them victory. [39] **(They are) the ones who were expelled from their homes without any just reason, except that they say "Our Lord is Allah." And had Allah not repelled some people by means of some others, the monasteries, the churches, the synagogues and the mosques where the name of Allah is recited abundantly would have been demolished. And Allah will definitely help those who help Him. Surely Allah is Powerful, Mighty.** [40]

(They are) those who, when We give them power in the land, establish Ṣalāh, pay Zakāh, bid the Fair and forbid the Unfair. And with Allah lies the fate of all matters. [41]

Commentary

First command to fight the infidels

The infidels of Makkah intensified their aggression against the Muslims and every day people arrived in Madīnah bearing marks of ill-treatment which they had suffered at the hands of unbelievers. In the

days before Hijrah the number of the faithful had increased considerably and they sought permission to defend themselves against the oppression to which they were being constantly subjected, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ advised them patience because he had not received Allah's permission so far to resist the infidels with force of arms. This situation persisted for about ten years. (Qurṭubī).

At last, things became so bad that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was left with no choice but to leave Makkah. As he started on his journey accompanied by Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه he said اخرجوا نبيّهم ليهلكنّ (They have expelled their Prophet and the time has come when they will perish). When he arrived at Madīnah this verse was revealed which permitted the Muslims to take up arms against the infidels. (رواه النسائى والترمذى عن ابن عباس - Qurṭubī)

Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim and others have reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that this is the first verse which permitted the Muslims to offer armed resistance to the infidels, whereas in more than seventy earlier verses armed resistance was forbidden.

The philosophy behind Jihād and war against the infidels

وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللّٰهِ النَّاسَ (And had Allah not repelled some people by means of some others... - 22:40) Had Allah not repelled some people by means of some others, the monasteries, the churches, the synagogues and the mosques where the name of Allah is recited abundantly would have been demolished. The command to take up arms against the unbelievers is nothing new, because the earlier prophets and their followers had received similar orders from Allah Ta'ālā and the philosophy behind this command was that without armed resistance no religion would have felt safe and their places of worship would have been destroyed by the infidels.

There have been many religions which were founded on the worship of one God and built up by means of *Waḥy* (Divine revelations). In course of time their basics were changed and so many alterations were introduced in them that they turned into unbelief and polytheism. But before these things happened, they were true religions and it was the duty of their followers to respect and defend their places of worship. This verse refers to such places of worship only and does not include the sacred

places of those religions which were not founded on prophethood and revelation (such as the fire-worshiping Magians, or the idol-worshiping Hindus) because they were at no time considered places deserving of respect.

In this verse صَوَامِع is the plural of صَوْمَعَه , which means a monastery which is a place of worship meant for Christian monks and hermits بِيَعٌ is the plural of بِيْعَة , which means a Christian church, and صَلَوٰت is the plural of صَلوٰت ,which means a Jewish synagogue. And of course مَسْجِد is the place of worship of the Muslims.

The meaning of this verse is that if at different times the believers had not been permitted to fight the infidels, no true religion would have felt secure and at different times during the periods of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام , Sayyidnā 'Isā' عليه السلام and the Holy Prophet ﷺ the places of worship of their respective religions would have been destroyed. (Qurṭubī)

Qur'ānic prophecy about the Rightly Guided Caliphs (خلفائے راشدین) and its fulfillment

اَلَّذِيْنَ اِنْ مَّكَّنّٰهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ (Those who, when We give them power in the land - 22:41) In this verse the word الذين (those) refers to those people who have been mentioned in the preceding verse: اَلَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ (Those are the ones who were expelled from their homes without any just reason - 22:40). Referring to such people the verse says that if they are placed in authority in this world, they will use it to promote good deeds, will set up prayers, pay the obligatory charity, enjoin people to do good and abstain from evil deeds. It has already been mentioned that these verses were revealed soon after Hijrah, at a time when the Muslims did not exercise dominion anywhere on earth, which means that Allah Ta'ālā had already made it known that when, at a future date, they would come to power and establish their government, they would serve the Faith in the manner described in this verse. Sayyidnā 'Uthman رضي الله عنه said referring to this verse, ثناء قبل بلاء that this verse praises those people before they actually perform the praise-worthy deeds. In due course Allah Ta'ālā's prophecy was fulfilled in that the four Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Muhajirīn (emigrants) from Makkah were indeed those whom the Qur'ān described by the words اَلَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا (those who were expelled - 22:40) and when they established their government and held sway over vast

territories, they used their power and authority in setting up prayers, strengthening the system of Zakāh, enjoining good and forbidding evil deeds. Many scholars are of the view that this verse is a clear evidence of the fact that accession to power of the four Caliphs (خلفائے راشدین) is a direct fulfillment of Allah's Prophesy, and the system of caliphate which was set up by them was in accordance with His will. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Having discussed the factual aspect of the circumstances leading up to the revelation of this verse it must, at the same time, be emphasized that where the Qur'ān uses general words and phrases, their purpose is not restricted to a particular situation, but is universally applicable to all similar situations. Following this reasoning, Ḍaḥḥāk رحمه الله تعالیٰ says that this verse contains an injunction for all those whom Allah Ta'ālā grants power and authority to do all those things which the Four Caliphs did when they controlled the rule. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 42 - 51

وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّثَمُوْدُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ
قَوْمُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَّاَصْحٰبُ مَدْيَنَ وَكُذِّبَ مُوْسٰى
فَاَمْلَيْتُ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ
قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا وَهِىَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِىَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ مُّعَطَّلَةٍ
وَّقَصْرٍ مَّشِيْدٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَتَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ
يَّعْقِلُوْنَ بِهَآ اَوْ اٰذَانٌ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا فَاِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْاَبْصَارُ وَلٰكِنْ
تَعْمَى الْقُلُوْبُ الَّتِىْ فِى الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ
وَلَنْ يُّخْلِفَ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ وَاِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَاَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا
تَعُدُّوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَمْلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِىَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهَا
وَاِلَىَّ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٤٩﴾
فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَالَّذِيْنَ سَعَوْا فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥١﴾

And if they belie you, so did belie the people of Nūḥ and 'Ād and Thamūd, [42] **and the people of Ibrāhīm and the people of Lūṭ,** [43] **and the people of Madyan as well. And Mūsā was (also) belied. So, I gave some respite to the disbelievers, then seized them. So how was My censure?** [44] **How many a town there were which We destroyed, when they were wrongdoers. So, there they are, fallen down on their roofs, and (how many a) deserted well and well-built castle!** [45]

Have they not, then, travelled on earth so that they should have had hearts to understand with or ears to listen with? The fact is that it is not the eyes that turn blind, but what turns blind is the hearts contained in the chests. [46]

And they ask you to bring the punishment sooner. And Allah will never go back on His promise. In fact, one day with your Lord is like one thousand years of what you count. [47] **And how many a town there were to whom I allowed respite, while they were wrongdoers, then I seized them. And to Me is the final return.** [48]

Say, "O people, I am no more than a plain warner for you. [49] **So those who come to believe and do good deeds, for them there is forgiveness and dignified provision.** [50] **And those who strive against Our signs trying to defeat (the prophet or the believers), they are the people of the Fire.** [51]

Commentary

Travels undertaken to acquire insight into things and to learn lessons from the past is one of the religious objectives

اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَتَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ (Have they not, then, travelled on earth so that they should have hearts - 22:46) This verse encourages travel, provided the person travelling keeps his eyes wide open and imbibes in his mind the lessons of history. The phrase فَتَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ (so that they should have hearts - 22:46) suggests that a person can gain wisdom and intelligence by a careful study of the history of bygone times and an account of people who inhabited this world in different ages. Every event

of history holds a lesson for a person who has insight and who does not regard history as a mere record of episodes and occurrences. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has written in his book التفكر quoting Mālik Ibn Dīnār رحمه الله تعالى that Allah Ta'ālā commanded Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to wear shoes made of iron and to hold in his hand a staff made of iron and travel around the earth until his shoes would be worn out and his staff broken down. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). If this narration is true, then naturally it means to acquire knowledge and lessons from the past.

How the Day of Resurrection will be equal to one thousand years by our reckoning

In this verse إِنَّ يَوْمًا عِندَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ (22:47) means that one day with your Lord is like one thousand years of what you count. This verse can be interpreted in two ways. The first meaning is that the verse refers to the Day of Resurrection and the events which will take place on that day will be so horrifying and of such extreme severity that the day will appear never to end, as if it was equal to one thousand years according to our reckoning. Many commentators have interpreted this verse accordingly.

The other meaning of the verse is that the Day of Resurrection will in actual fact be so long that it will stretch up to one thousand years of this world. This view is supported by a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as reported in Musnād of Aḥmad and Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once addressed the poor people of the *muhājirīn* (i.e. those who migrated from Makkah) and said, 'I give you good news about the full refulgence on the Day of Resurrection and that you will be admitted to heaven half a day before the rich and the wealthy, and a day in the Hereafter will be of one thousand years, hence the poor will enter the heaven five hundred years before the wealthy'. Tirmidhī has classified this *ḥadīth* as '*ḥasan*'. (Maẓharī)

A doubt and its explanation

There is a verse in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij which says that the day with your Lord will be equal to fifty thousand years كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ. (Whereof the measure is fifty thousand yours - 70:4) This can also be explained by applying either of the two explanations of the present verse and in the first case since every person will suffer different levels of severity, to some it will appear as if he has suffered pain for one thousand

years, while to others the period will appear equal to fifty thousand years. If, however, the second explanation is applied to this verse, then there would appear to be a contradiction between the verses where one verse equates the Day of Resurrection to one thousand years and the other to fifty thousand years. But this so-called contradiction has been reconciled by Sayyidi Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi رحمه الله تعالى in his commentary Bayan ul-Qur'an, by saying that this difference may be due to different horizons. Just as we see in our world that the length of day and night is different on different horizons, (on zero latitude it is of 24 hours while at the latitude of 90^o it is one year. Likewise it is possible that the length of the Day of Resurrection would be different on different horizons, and if its length right below the day line is one thousand years because of miraculously slow rotation of sun or earth), the areas falling 50 times far from it may have a day 50 times more in length. And Allah knows best.

Verses 52 - 57

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ وَّلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّآ إِذَا تَمَنّٰىٓ أَلْقَى
الشَّيْطٰنُ فِيٓ أُمْنِيَّتِهٖ ۚ فَيَنْسَخُ اللّٰهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطٰنُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللّٰهُ
اٰيٰتِهٖ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ لِّيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطٰنُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَّالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ الظّٰلِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ
بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَّلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهٖ
فَتُخْبِتَ لَهٗ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوٓا إِلٰى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتّٰى تَأْتِيَهُمُ
السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلّٰهِ ۗ
يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فِي جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيمِ
﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَأُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

And We did not send any messenger before you nor a prophet, but (he faced a situation that) when he recited (the revelation), the Satan cast (doubts) about what he

recited. So, Allah nullifies what the Satan casts, then Allah makes His verses firm, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise [52] **- (all this is allowed to be done) so that He may make what Satan casts a trial for those in whose hearts there is a disease and whose hearts are hard; and surely the wrongdoers are in the utmost antagonism -** [53] **and so that those who have been given knowledge may know that it (i.e. the revelation recited by the prophet) is the truth from your Lord, and they may believe in it and their hearts may become humble towards it. And Allah is the One who takes the believers to the straight path.** [54]

And those who disbelieve will remain in doubt about it (the Qur'ān) forever, until the Hour (of Judgment) comes upon them suddenly, or there comes to them the punishment of a barren day. [55] **The kingdom, on that day, is for Allah. He will judge between them. So, those who believed and did good deeds shall be in gardens of bliss.** [56] **As for those who disbelieved and belied Our signs, they are the ones for whom there is a humiliating punishment.** [57]

Commentary

مِن رَّسُولٍ وَّلَا نَبِيٍّ (any messenger and any prophet - 22:52) This shows that the words Rasūl رَسُوْل and Nabi نَبِی carry different meanings, though there is no consensus as to the precise nature of the difference. For our purpose it is enough to understand that Nabi نَبِی is a person whom Allah Ta'ālā designates with a mission to reform his people and who receives revelations from Him. He may receive a Scripture and a code of laws or he may be commanded to convey the message of an earlier Book and code of laws. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and 'Īsā' عليه السلام belong to the first category, whereas Sayyidnā Hārūn, who was directed to propagate the teachings of Torah and the Mosaic Laws, falls in the second category. On the other hand a Rasūl رَسُوْل is a person who receives from Allah Ta'ālā a Scripture and a code of laws. Thus every Rasūl is necessarily a Nabi also, but every Nabi is not a Rasūl. These distinctions are applicable to human beings only. That an angel who carries *waḥy* from Allah Ta'ālā is also named as Rasul does not contradict this position. This subject has already been discussed in detail in Sūrah Maryam in the beginning of this volume.

أَلْقَى الشَّيْطٰنُ فِيْٓ أُمْنِيَّتِهٖ (The Satan cast (doubts) about what he recited - 22:52) In this verse the word تَمَنّٰى has been used as a synonym for قَرَأَ, thus أُمْنِيَّه would mean قِرَاءَت (recitation). This verse explains that the disputes raised by the disbelievers in regard to Allah's message is not something new as similar doubts were raised by earlier people as well when their prophets presented to them the message of Truth, and the Satan cast doubts about it in the hearts of disbelievers. This explanation of the verse is quite clear and straight-forward, and has been adopted by many commentators including Abū Ḥayyān in his Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ. However, some books of traditions have reported here an incident which is not proved by authentic sources. The incident is known as حَدِيْثُ الْغَرَانِيْق (*ḥadīth-ul-gharānīq*). Some scholars have held that it is invented by some heretics and enemies of Islam. But even those who believe this tradition to be worthwhile have taken pains to remove the doubts, which the words raise about the categorical and undisputed laws of Qur'ān and Sunnah. The plain and simple meaning of the verse has been explained above and the alleged incident in no way affects this meaning. Making this incident as a part and parcel of the commentary on this verse, thereby creating unnecessary doubts, and then attempting to answer those doubts is an exercise in futility and absolutely undesirable والله سبحانه و تعالى اعلم .

Verses 58 - 59

وَالَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوْٓا اَوْمَاتُوْا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللّٰهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۭ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿۵۸﴾ لَيُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ مُّدْخَلًا يَّرْضَوْنَهٗ ۭ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَلِيْمٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿۵۹﴾

And those who left their homeland in the way of Allah, then were slain or died, Allah will certainly give them a good provision, and surely, Allah is the best of all givers. [58] **He will definitely admit them to an entrance they will be pleased with, and Allah is surely All-Knowing, Forbearing.** [59]

Commentary

Those people who had left their hearth and homes in the cause of

Allah and were killed or died of natural death, they would definitely be rewarded. If they have not benefited in this world, their reward will be there in the Hereafter.

Verse 60

ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَاعُوقِبَ بِهٖ ثُمَّ بُغِىَ عَلَيْهِ لَيَنْصُرَنَّهُ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

That (is so). And whoever afflicts (someone) with a punishment equal to what he was afflicted with (by the latter), and still he (the former) is (again) subjected to injustice, Allah will certainly help him. Indeed, Allah is Most-Pardoning, Most-Forgiving. [60]

Commentary

In an earlier verse it has been mentioned that Allah Ta'ālā helps those who are wronged unjustly. وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيْرٌ. (Allah is powerful to give them victory - 22:39) Some people bear their sufferings patiently and do not seek vengeance from their oppressors, but there are others who retaliate and serve a full measure of retribution on their oppressors which should, therefore, place them both on even terms as being quits. But if the oppressor, incensed at the retaliation, attacks him again, then this person once again becomes the victim of oppression. This verse promises Allah's help for such a person also. On the other hand there are several verses which promise Allah's goodwill to those Muslims who bear their sufferings with patience and equanimity and do not seek vengeance from their oppressors. Some of these verses are:

فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ

But whoso pardons and puts things right, his wage falls upon Allah - 42:40.

وَاَنْ تَعْفُوْٓا اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى

And that you forgive is closer to Taqwā - 2:237.

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ

But surely he who bears patiently and forgives - surely that is true constancy - 42:43.

In all these verses it is encouraged not to retaliate for revenge and rather forgive and forget, which is a magnanimous way of dealing with fellow human beings. This is the way Qur'ānic teachings stand and call it a supreme and superior trait. Thus it may perhaps be argued that the person who retaliates against the wrongs done to him and conducts himself contrary to the course of action preferred by Allah Ta'ālā will be deprived of His support and help. But this doubt has been allayed in the final part of this verse اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ (22:60) that is, Allah will not punish him for this lapse and will help him if he is subjected to injustice by his oppressors ever again. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Verses 61 - 66

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِى النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِى الَّيْلِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ
سَمِيْعٌ ۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٦١﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِىُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ
مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۡ فَتُصْبِحُ الْاَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَطِيْفٌ خَبِيْرٌ
﴿٦٣﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ الْغَنِىُّ
الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٦٤﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ
تَجْرِىْ فِى الْبَحْرِ بِاَمْرِهٖ ؕ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَآءَ اَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا
بِاِذْنِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْٓ اَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَكَفُوْرٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

That is because Allah makes night enter into the day and makes day enter into the night and that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. [61] **That is because Allah is the truth and that whatever they invoke beside Him is false and that Allah is the High, the Great.** [62]

Did you not see that Allah has sent down water from the sky, whereby the land becomes green? Surely, Allah is All-Kind, All-Aware. [63] **To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and surely**

Allah is the All-Independent, Ever-Praised. [64]

Did you not see that Allah has subjugated to you whatever there is on the earth, and the ships that sail at sea with His command? And He holds the heavens from falling on the earth, except with His permission. Surely Allah is Very-Kind to the people, Very-Merciful. [65]

And He is the One who gave life to you, then He brings death to you, then He will give you life (again). Surely, man is very ungrateful. [66]

Commentary

سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ (Allah has subjugated to you whatever there is on the earth - 22:65) It means that everything on this earth has been placed under the control of man. This raises the question that the mountains, rivers, beasts and birds and thousands of similar objects do not follow the commands of man. But placing something in the service of someone is also like putting it under his control, and in this verse the word Taskhīr (subjugation) has been used to mean 'to serve'. The verse therefore means that all the things mentioned above are all the time working in the service of man by the command of Allah. It was quite within the power of Allah Ta'ālā to have placed all these things under the control of man, but in such a situation man himself would have been the loser, because human natures, desires and needs differ. If a person ordered the river to divert towards a particular direction, and some other person ordered to the contrary, the result would have been utter chaos and confusion. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā has retained with Him alone the command of these things, but the benefits to be derived from them accrue to human beings.

Verses 67 - 70

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعُنَّكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ۖ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَإِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ

فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ فِىْ كِتٰبٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

And For every *ummah* (religious community) We have appointed a way of worship they are to observe. Therefore, they should never quarrel with you in the matter. And do call them to your Lord. Surely, you are on straight Guidance. [67]

And if they dispute with you, then say, "Allah knows best what you do." [68] **Allah will judge between you, on the Day of Judgment, about what you used to differ in.** [69]

Do you not know that Allah knows all that is in the sky and the earth? Surely, that is contained in a Book. Indeed it is so easy for Allah. [70]

Commentary

لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا (For every *ummah* (religious community) We have appointed a way of worship - 22:67). This sentence has come earlier in almost identical words in verse number 34 of this Sūrah, but the word مَنْسَك (*mansak)* conveys a different meaning in each verse. In the earlier verse the words مَنْسَك and نسك have been used in the context of the rites of Ḥajj and mean sacrifice of animals, while in the present verse the word مَنْسَك has been used in the sense of the rules of slaughter or general rules of worship. That is why, unlike the verse 34, the present verse does not have the conjunctive letter 'و' (i.e. 'and') in the beginning.

One interpretation of this verse is that the infidels used to engage the Muslims in futile arguments regarding the slaughter of animals. They thought it odd that Islam permitted its followers to eat the meat of those animals which they slaughtered with their own hands but forbade to eat the meat of those animals whom Allah Ta'ālā killed, that is the carrion. The present verse was revealed to answer these objections of the infidels. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). Thus the meaning of the word مَنْسَك here would refer to 'the method of slaughter', and the sum and substance of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā gave each nation a code of laws, and the rules governing the slaughter of animals are different in each code. The rules of slaughter given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ are independent and self-sufficient and it is

not permissible to compare them with those of an earlier Sharī'ah, let alone comparing them with someone's own whims and conjectures. As regards the meat of dead animals, it is well known that its oral use was forbidden in all earlier codes. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī) Therefore, it is sheer ignorance to argue with the Holy Prophet ﷺ on that basis.

However, majority of commentators has interpreted this verse in another way. They say that the word مَنسَكً here means the general rules of Shari'ah. Lexically, the word مَنسَكً means a place which is fixed for a specific purpose, whether the purpose is good or bad, and for this reason the rites of pilgrimage are known as مَنَاسِك , because different rites connected with the pilgrimage have to be performed at places fixed for each rite. (Ibn Kathīr). The dictionary meaning of نُسُك is 'piety and worship of Allah Ta'ālā', and the words أَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا (And show us our ways of worship - 2:128) occurring in the Qur'ān have been used in this sense مَنَاسِك Manāsik means rules governing worship. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās has adopted this second interpretation also. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī etc. have adopted this meaning of the word, and the context of the verse also lends support to this interpretation. Having said all this, it is evident that the meaning of this verse would be that the infidels and the polytheists who dispute the Islamic code of laws on the ground that their own ancestral religion did not include those laws must understand very clearly that any comparison between the old book or Sharī'ah and the new book or Sharī'ah is totally misplaced and irrelevant, because Allah Ta'ālā granted to each nation in its own time a special Sharī'ah and a Book which was binding upon it until another book or Sharī'ah arrived on the scene after which it becomes the duty of all people to follow the new Sharī'ah, and if any of its laws are in conflict with the laws of the old Sharī'ah, then the new rules shall prevail and the old laws will stand invalidated, and nobody has the right to raise a dispute on this matter with the Prophet, who is the recipient of the latest book and Sharī'ah. This is the meaning of the following words of this verse. فَلَا يُنَازِعُنَّكَ فِى الْأَمْرِ (They should never quarrel with you in the matter - 22:67). That is, now that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has brought a new Book and new code of laws no one has the right to dispute them and create any confusion about them.

This also shows that there is in fact no inconsistency between the two

interpretations of this verse. It is quite possible that this verse was revealed with reference to some specific dispute about the slaughter of animals but since, as a general rule, the words must be interpreted in the sense they are understood by the common people and not in reference to a particular event, the words of this verse can be so construed as to apply to all the laws of Sharī'ah. The essence of both the interpretations, therefore is, that since Allah Ta'ālā has given each nation its own particular set of rules where differences as to details do exist, the latest set of rules becomes binding on all peoples, and issues relating to these differences cannot be raised. This is the reason why it has been stated at the end of this verse وَادْعُ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ اِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ (And do call them to your Lord. Surely, you are on straight Guidance - 22:67) in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been advised not to take any notice of the machinations and disputes raised by the infidels but to continue with his mission, because he was following the path of righteousness whereas his opponents were steeped in error.

A doubt and its answer

In verse 67 it has been averred that Allah Ta'ālā granted to the earlier nations their own Sharī'ah or set of rules, and the Mosaic Code and the Christian Code are instances in point. The Jews and the Christians may, therefore, argue that their Codes also being Divine should be allowed to exist alongside of the Islamic Code. But this is a fallacious argument because it is a well established fact that an earlier Sharī'ah is cancelled by a subsequent Sharī'ah, and this view is reinforced by the following verses in which the infidels who challenge the Islamic Sharī'ah have been warned of severe chastisement. وَاِنْ جٰدَلُوْكَ فَقُلِ اللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ (And if they dispute with you, then say, "Allah knows best what you do." - 22:68)

Verses 71 - 74

وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهٖ سُلْطٰنًا وَّمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ؕ وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ نَّصِيْرٍ ﴿۷۱﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِيْ وُجُوْهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ ؕ يَكَادُوْنَ يَسْطُوْنَ بِالَّذِيْنَ يَتْلُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ؕ قُلْ اَفَاُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ ذٰلِكُمْ ؕ اَلنَّارُ ؕ وَعَدَهَا اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ

كَفَرُوْا ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٧٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوْا لَهٗ ۗ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَنْ يَّخْلُقُوْا ذُبَابًا وَّلَوِ اجْتَمَعُوْا لَهٗ ۗ وَاِنْ يَّسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَّا يَسْتَنْقِذُوْهُ مِنْهُ ۗ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوْبُ ﴿٧٣﴾ مَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٧٤﴾

And they worship, besides Allah, the objects for which He did never send down an authority (or proof) and for which they have no knowledge. And for the wrongdoers there is no helper. [71]

And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, you (can) recognize disgust on the faces of the disbelievers. They seem to attack those who recite to them Our verses. Say, "Shall I, then, tell you about something more disgusting than that? The Fire! Allah has promised it to those who disbelieve. And it is an evil end." [72]

O people, here is a parable set forth to you, so listen to it carefully: All those whom you invoke besides Allah can never create (even) a fly, even though they all join hands together for that. And if a fly snatches something away from them, they cannot release it therefrom. (Equally) feeble are the invoker and the invoked. [73]

They did not recognize Allah in His true esteem. Indeed Allah is Powerful, Mighty. [74]

Commentary

Illustrating the futility of polytheism and idol-worship by citing a parable

Generally the words ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ are used for quoting an incident as an example. However, it is not used here in that sense but the foolishness of idol worship has been illustrated by citing a parable. The infidels are told that the idols from which they seek the gratification of their desires are so utterly helpless that all of them together cannot create a humble thing like a fly. Indeed they cannot even protect the offerings of eatables, which their worshippers bring them daily, against the inroads of flies. Then how

can they protect you from any calamity? The stupidity and foolishness of the idol-worshippers has been described at the end of the verse by the words ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوْبُ (Feeble are the invoker and the invoked - 22:73) meaning thereby that if the object of worship is so utterly weak and powerless, those worshipping it must be more so.

مَاقَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ (They did not recognize Allah in His true esteem - 22:74). It means that these people are so foolish and ungrateful that they did not recognize the power of Allah Ta'ālā and place their helpless idols at the same level with Him.

Verses 75 - 78

اَللّٰهُ يَصْطَفِىْ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَّمِنَ النَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ
﴿۷۵﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ؕ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ
﴿۷۶﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا ارْكَعُوْا وَاسْجُدُوْا وَاعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا
الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۷۷﴾ وَجَاهِدُوْا فِى اللّٰهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهٖ ؕ
هُوَاجْتَبٰىكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ؕ مِلَّةَ اَبِيْكُمْ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ؕ هُوَسَمّٰىكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ۙ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِىْ هٰذَا لِيَكُوْنَ
الرَّسُوْلُ شَهِيْدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚۖ فَاَقِيْمُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ ؕ هُوَمَوْلٰىكُمْ ۚ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰى
وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيْرُ ﴿۷۸﴾

Allah chooses messengers from angels and from men. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. [75]

He knows what is in front of them and what is behind them, and to Allah all matters are to be returned. [76]

O those who believe, bow down in *rukū'* and bow down in *sajdah* and worship your Lord and do good, so that you achieve success. [77] **And struggle for (seeking the pleasure of) Allah, a struggle that is owed to Him. He has chosen you and did not impose any hardship on you**

in the religion - the faith of your father Ibrāhīm. He (Allah) named you as Muslims both before and in this (Qur'ān), so that the Messenger becomes a witness to you and you become witnesses to (other) people.

So establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*, and hold fast to Allah. He is your patron. So, He is the excellent One to be a patron and He is the excellent One to help. [78]

Commentary

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا ارْكَعُوْا وَاسْجُدُوْا وَاعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمْ (O those who believe, bow down in Ruku' and bow down in Sajdah and worship your Lord - 22:77) Verse 18 of this Sūrah is a verse of *sajdah* by consensus of the jurists, which means that whoever recites verse 18 or listens to someone reciting it must offer a *sajdah*. However, there is a difference of opinion about the present verse. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik and Sufyān Thaurī رحمهم الله تعالى are among those who think that the present verse is not a verse of *sajdah* in the sense that reciting this verse or listening to it does not entail the obligation to offer a *sajdah,* because the command to 'bow down' in *sajdah* in the present verse is combined with bowing down in *ruku'* and this circumstance is a clear indication that in the present context *sajdah* means the normal *sajdah* which is performed during the course of prayers. For example all the scholars are unanimously of the opinion that in the verse وَاسْجُدِىْ وَارْكَعِىْ مَعَ الرّٰكِعِيْنَ (And prostrate and bow down (in *Ruku'*) with those who bow - 3:43) the *sajdah* is the normal *sajdah* of the prayers. However, in the context of the present verse Imām Shafi'ī and Imām Aḥmad رحمهم الله تعالى hold contrary views and quote a *ḥadīth* according to which Sūrah Ḥajj enjoys a position of greater merit as compared to other Sūrahs because of two verses of *sajdah* occurring in it. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah questions the authenticity of this *ḥadīth*.

وَجَاهِدُوْا فِى اللّٰهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهٖ (And struggle for (seeking the pleasure of) Allah, a struggle that is due to him - 22:78) The words جِهَاد (*jihād*) and مُجَاهَدَه (*mujahadah*) mean to exert one's utmost effort to achieve an objective and to take pains for it. (That is why the word is translated above as 'struggle'). While waging war against the infidels the Muslims make supreme efforts, and for this reason it is called *jihād*, and حَقَّ جِهَادِهٖ (a struggle that is due to Him) means that all these efforts and sacrifices should aim solely at winning the favours and goodwill of Allah Ta'ālā,

and be free from all considerations of worldly reward, such as fame or spoils of war.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has explained the phrase 'that is due to Him' by saying that it is to strive to the utmost of one's capacity in the course of *jihād*, unmindful of all criticism. Some other commentators have explained the word *jihād* in this verse to mean that one exerts his utmost effort in carrying out the acts of worship and full obedience to rules of Sharī'ah in all sincerity. Ḍaḥḥāk and Muqātil have said that a struggle that is due to Him means to act in Allah's obedience and His worship as due to Him. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mubarak ﷺ thinks that Jihad means to strive against the temptations (*nafs*) and its baser desires. Imām Baghawī supports this view on the basis of a *ḥadīth* which he has from Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh ﷺ to the effect that when a group of companions returned from Jihād, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said قدمتم خير مقدم من الجهاد الاصغر الى الجهاد الاكبر. قال: مجاهدة العبد لهواه (رواه البيهقي وقالَ هذا اسناد فيه ضعف (You have returned from a smaller *Jihād* to a greater *Jihād*) meaning thereby that the fight against the temptations of self and baser desires never ceases. Baihaqī has also related this *ḥadīth* but he is of the opinion that it has some weak narrators, Tafsīr Maẓharī has adopted this latter interpretation and proceeded to say that the Muslims were in fact fighting against the coarse desires of Self even when they were engaged in *jihād* against the infidels, but the *ḥadīth* places it after their return from the *jihād*. The suggestion here is that though the fight against temptations continued even on the battlefield, it could by tradition and usage be brought to fruition only under the watchful eye of a perfect spiritual guide, that is the Holy Prophet ﷺ .

The Ummah of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the chosen Ummah of Allah Ta'ālā

هُوَ اجْتَبٰكُمْ (He has chosen you - 22:78) Sayyidnā Wāthilah Ibn Asqa' ﷺ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said, 'Allah chose the Kinānah from the children of Sayyidnā Isma'īl ﷺ, then He chose the Quraish from the Kinānah, then the Banī Hāshim from the Quraish and from amongst the Banī Hāshim He chose me'. (Muslim – Maẓharī).

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ (And did not impose any hardship on you in the religion - 22:78) It means that Allah Ta'ālā has not imposed any hardship upon you in matters of religion. From this some scholars have

concluded that in Islam there is no sin which cannot be forgiven and save a person from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection if he repents for it truly. On the other hand, among the earlier nations there were certain sins which could not be forgiven even by offering repentance.

According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ 'hardship' refers to those rigid and harsh laws which applied to the Banī Isrā'īl and for which the Qur'ān uses the words إصر (burden) and إغلال (shackles). Others have interpreted the word *ḥaraj* (hardship) to mean a hardship which is beyond human endurance. In Islam there are no such laws and rules which are unbearable in themselves, though there are some rules which entail strenuous effort. But such efforts have always been regarded as pre-requisites to success in all human activities. Education, commerce, industry etc. are fields where success depends on unremitting labour but that would not make these tasks impossible to achieve. Sometimes difficulties are experienced due to unfavorable environments or lack of familiarity with the task in hand, but these too cannot be described as hardships and can be overcome by sustained hard work.

Another interpretation given by Qāḍī Thanaullāh in Tafsīr Maẓharī is that Allah Ta'ālā having chosen the Muslims for His favours from amongst all other nations, they too willingly opt for the severest hardship in the service of Allah and His religion. In such a situation even hardships and difficulties do not deter their resilience and they endure them willingly and happily. There is a *ḥadīth* related by Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said جعلت قرة عينى فى الصّلوة (the coolness of my eyes lies in prayers). (Aḥmad and Nasa'ī).

مِلَّةَ اَبِيكُمْ إِبْرٰهِيمَ (The faith of your father Ibrāhīm - 22:78). It means that this is the nation of your father Ibrāhīm ﷺ. These words are addressed to the Quraish who are descended from Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ and all other people following them become entitled to the favours which Allah Ta'ālā has granted to the Quraish. There is a *ḥadīth* which says:

الناس تبع لقريش فى هذا الشان، مسلمهم تبع لمسلمهم، وكافرهم تبع لكافرهم

(رواه البخارى و مسلم)

All people follow Quraish in this faith; the believers follow the believers among the Quraish, and the infidels follow the infidels among them. (Maẓharī).

Others say that the words أَبِيْكُمْ إِبْرٰهِيْمَ (your father Ibrāhīm) are addressed to all Muslims in the sense that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the spiritual father of All Muslims and had himself descended from Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام .

هُوَسَمّٰىكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ۙ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِيْ هٰذَا (He (Allah) named you as Muslims both before and in this Qur'an - 22:78) Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had named the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and all other believers as Muslims even before the Qur'ān, and later in the Qur'ān itself, as is evident from his prayer which is recorded in the Qur'ān: رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ (O our Lord, make us both submissive to you, and of our progeny a people submissive to you - 2:128)

And the name "Muslim" given by the Qur'ān to the believers, was, though, not given directly by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام , yet since he had suggested this name even before the revelation of the Qur'ān, the Holy Qur'ān has adopted this name. That is why it is attributed to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام .

لِيَكُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلُ شَهِيْدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ (So that the Messenger becomes a witness to you and you become witnesses to (other) people - 22:78) On the Day of Resurrection the Holy Prophet ﷺ will depose that he had conveyed the commands of Allah Ta'ālā to his Ummah and the Ummah will acknowledge this fact. But when other prophets will make similar depositions, their Ummahs will deny their claims and at that time the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ will come forward and bear witness to the fact that all the prophets had indeed conveyed the commands of Allah Ta'ālā to their respective Ummahs. This evidence will be challenged on the ground that since the Muslim Ummah did not even exist in those earlier times it carried no weight, to which the Muslims will reply that they learned about these matters from their own Prophet ﷺ, whose truthfulness and integrity was admitted by all. This is the gist of a *ḥadīth* which Bukhārī and others have related on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه.

فَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ (So establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh* - 22:78) It means that since Allah Ta'ālā has showered on you unlimited benefits, it is your duty also to show your gratitude to Him by striving hard to obey His commands. The two commands relating to prayers and *zakāh* have been

specifically mentioned because prayer is the most important among the obligations performed by human body, while *zakāh* is the most important among the commands about wealth, otherwise the idea is that all commands enjoined by Allah Ta'ālā be obeyed and followed.

وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ (And hold fast to Allah - 22:78). It means that pious Muslims should place their trust in Allah alone in all their affairs and seek help from none but Him. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ the sense of these words is that pious Muslims should seek Allah's protection from all things which are loathsome in this world and in the Hereafter. Others have interpreted these words to mean that good Muslims should hold fast to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and have quoted the following *ḥadīth*:

> تركت فيكم امرين لن تضلّوا ما تمسّكتم بهما، كتاب اللّٰه وسنّة رسوله (رواه مالك في الموطاء مرسلا- مظهرى)
>
> "I have left behind two things with you and if you hold fast to them you will never go astray: one is the Book of Allah and the second is the Sunnah of His Rasūl." (Maẓharī)

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥajj
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn

(The Believers)

Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn was revealed in Makkah and it has 118 Verses and 6 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۱﴾ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِىْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُوْنَ ﴿۲﴾
وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿۳﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ
﴿۴﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ ﴿۵﴾ اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْمَا
مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ﴿۶﴾ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ﴿۷﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ ﴿۸﴾
وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ ﴿۹﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾
الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ ؕ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾

Success is really attained by the believers [1] **who are concentrative in their Ṣalāh (prayers)** [2] **and who keep themselves away from vain things** [3], **and who are performers of Zakāh,*** [4] **and who guard their private parts** [5] **except from their wives or from those (slave-girls) owned by their right hands, because they**

*. Although Zakāh is normally known as the obligatory alms prescribed as a second pillar of Islam, but the literal meaning of the word is 'purification'. Both the meanings are possible here. According to the second meaning the reference would be to the purification of inward qualities i.e. morals. Some commentators have construed this verse in this sense. That is why we have used the word 'performers' as a literal translation of "فاعلون" (Fa'ilun) instead of 'payers' which admits the first meaning only.

are not liable to blame. [6] **However, those who seek (sexual pleasure) beyond that are the transgressors** [7] **– and (success is attained) by those who honestly look after their trusts and covenant,** [8] **and who consistently observe their prayers.** [9] **Those are the inheritors** [10] **who will inherit Firdaus (the Paradise). They will be there forever.** [11]

Commentary

Merits and special features of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn

Musnād of Aḥmad quotes Sayyidnā 'Umar al-Fārūq ﷺ that whenever a *waḥy* was being revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ those near him used to hear a sound like the buzz of the bees. One day when they heard such a sound, they all waited hoping to learn about the revelation. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ returned to his normal state after receiving the *waḥy*, he sat down facing the Ka'bah and prayed to Allah in the following words:

اَللّٰهُمَّ زِدْنَا وَلَا تَنْقُصْنَا وَاَكْرِمْنَا وَلَا تُهِنَّا وَاَعْطِنَا وَلَا تَحْرِمْنَا وَآثِرْنَا وَلَا تُؤْثِرْ عَلَيْنَا وَارْضَ عَنَّا وَاَرْضِنَا

"O Allah, give us more (bounties) and do not decrease (them for us) and grant us respect and do not put us to humiliation, and give us and do not deprive us and give us preference (on our enemies) and do not give preference (to our enemies) against us and be pleased with us and make us pleased."

Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to his companions, "Just now ten verses have been revealed to me and anyone who follows them in letter and spirit will go to heaven." He then recited the first ten verses of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn. (Ibn Kathīr)

Nasa'ī in his كتاب التفسير has quoted Yazīd Ibn Babnūs that he once questioned Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها about the habits and the behavior of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to which she replied that it was according to what has been revealed in the Qur'ān. Then she recited these ten verses of the Qur'ān and said, "these verses describe his behavior".

What is *Falāḥ*? How and from where can it be obtained?

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ

Success is really attained by the believers - 23:1.

The word *falāḥ* (translated above as 'success') has been used in the Qur'ān and Sunnah on numerous occasions. The call to prayers invites every Muslim towards *falāḥ* five times a day. The word signifies the attainment of all desires as well as protection from all misfortunes. (Qāmūs). It is so comprehensive in its connotation that it may be regarded as the acme of one's desire - but the total *falāḥ,* where no desire remains unfulfilled or complete immunity from the vicissitudes of fate exists, is not granted even to great kings or to the most revered prophets of Allah. In any case there is an ever-present fear of a decline in or loss of good fortune, or the apprehension of an impending disaster, and no living person can claim to be free from it.

Thus it is evident that total *falāḥ* cannot be achieved in this world which is a place of pain and suffering, where nothing is everlasting and everything must ultimately perish. However this priceless commodity will be available in another world, namely the Paradise and it is there that people will achieve all their wishes very promptly وَلَهُم مَّا يَدَّعُونَ (They have all that they call for - 36:57). In that world there will be no sorrow, no distress, and everyone will enter there with the following words on his lips:

اَلْحَمْدُلِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزَنَ اِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرُ ۙ الَّذِیْٓ اَحَلَّنَا دَارَالْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ

> Praise belongs to Allah who has put away all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord is All-Forgiving, All-Thankful, who of His bounty has made us to dwell in the abode of everlasting life - 35:34, 35.

This verse also suggest that in this world there is nobody who at some time or the other has not been afflicted by pain and anguish. Therefore, on entering the Paradise people will say that they have been delivered from all sufferings. In Sūrah al-A'lā while the Qur'ān says that *falāḥ* may be obtained by purifying oneself against sins (قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى), it also says that total *falāḥ* may be achieved in the Hereafter only. A Person who aims at *falāḥ* must not succumb to the temptations of this world:

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى

> Nay, but you prefer the present life; and the world to come is better, and more lasting. - 87: 16, 17

In brief, while total *falāḥ* may be obtained in the Paradise only, Allah grants *falāḥ* to his servants in this world also in the narrow sense of the word i.e. he grants them prosperity and relief from pain. In the present verse Allah has promised *falāḥ* to those believers who possess the seven attributes mentioned therein, and it includes the total *falāḥ* which can be achieved in the Hereafter only in addition to whatever *falāḥ* may be obtained in this world.

Here one may ask that while the promise of total *falāḥ* in the Hereafter to the believers who possess the seven attributes mentioned in this verse is understandable, the common experience is that in this world the recipients of *falāḥ* (prosperity and success) are generally the infidels and the impious persons. On the other hand the prophets and other reformers have, in all ages, suffered privations of life. The answer to this is that since total *falāḥ* is to be achieved in the Hereafter only, it is inevitable that every body in this world, whether he is a good and a pious man or whether he is a wicked person and an unbeliever, must face a certain measure of pain and hardship. Similarly every person, good or bad, has some of his wishes granted in this world. In these circumstances how is one to decide as to which of these two categories is the recipient of *falāḥ*. The answer to this question can only be provided by the fate which awaits them.

Human experience and observations provide sufficient evidence that although the pious people who possess the seven attributes mentioned above may at times face hardships and tribulations in this world, yet very soon they are released from all distress and they achieve their wishes. They command the respect of the whole world as long as they live and then after their death their memory is cherished and revered by all.

The seven attributes of a perfect Believer on the basis of which he has been promised *falāḥ* in this verse both in this world and in the Hereafter

The first and most important attribute which is fundamental and basic to everything else is that a person should be a true believer. The other seven attributes mentioned in the verse are discussed below.

The first attribute is خُشُوع Khushū' (translated in the text as being concentrative) during prayers. The literal meaning of this word is

"calmness", but in religious terminology it means "to bring about a state of perfect concentration in the heart" so that he does not knowingly allow any thoughts to enter his heart other than the remembrance of Allah. It also means that during prayers a person must abstain from moving his body and limbs unnecessarily (Bayān ul-Qur'ān). He must, in particular, avoid those movements of the body which have been forbidden by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and which the jurists have compiled under the general heading مَكْرُوهَات (things which are disliked during prayers). Tafsīr Maẓharī quotes the above definition of خُشُوْع (Khushū') from Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Dīnār ؓ. Other scholars have given different definitions of this word, but they are in fact further details of what the serenity of the heart and the body means. For instance, according to Sayyidnā Mujāhid, casting down one's eyes and keeping the voice low is خُشُوْع whereas Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ said that خُشُوْع is to refrain from casting sideways glances obliquely. Sayyidnā 'Aṭā' says that the word means "not toying with any part of the body". There is a *ḥadīth* from Sayyidnā Abū Dharr ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said, "Allah keeps an eye over His servant during prayers so long as he concentrates his attention on Allah, but when he turns his attention elsewhere and glances obliquely sideways, Allah also turns away from him." (Maẓharī) The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have directed Sayyidnā 'Anas ؓ to keep his eyes fixed at the spot which he touched with his forehead when performing *sajdah* (prostration) and not to look right and left during prayers.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw a man praying who was toying with his beard and remarked لوخشع قلب هذا لخشعت جوارحه (If this man had Khushū' in his heart, his body and limbs would have remained calm).

How important is Khushū' during prayers?

Imām Ghazzali, Qurṭubī and some other scholars are of the view that Khushū' during prayers is obligatory and a prayer offered without total Khushū' will be deemed not to have been performed. However there are others who believe that while Khushū' is the essence of prayers and its absence deprives the prayers of their true purpose, yet it cannot be regarded as an indispensable condition for the prayers to be valid and its absence will not render it necessary to repeat performance of the prayers.

Hakim ul-Ummah has written in Bayān ul-Qur'ān that while

Khushū' is not a necessary condition for the validity of the prayers, yet it is an essential element for the acceptance of the prayers by Allah and from this point of view it is obligatory. Ṭabarānī in his book al-Mu'jim al-Kabīr has related a *ḥadīth* on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dardā' ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The first thing that will be taken away from this Ummah is Khushū' so much so that a time will come when no one will be left to practice Khushū'".

The second attribute of a good Muslim is that he abstains from frivolous and vain things. لَغْو (Laghw, translated in the text as 'vain things') means useless talk and action which do not bring any religious reward and in its extreme form it may include sinful acts that are positively harmful and must, therefore, be avoided. And in its mild from *laghw* is neither useful nor harmful but it is very desirable to give up this habit. There is a *ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said من حسن اسلام المرا تركه ما لا يعنيه (It is a part of one's being a fair Muslim that he gives up all that is useless for him). For these reasons guarding oneself against useless acts has been described as an attribute of a good Muslim in this verse.

The third attribute is Zakāh which, literally means "to purify" but in religious terminology it means giving in charity a portion of one's wealth subject to certain prescribed conditions and the word has been generally used in the Qur'ān in this sense. This meaning of the word can be applied in this verse also. However this meaning of the word in the present context has been questioned by some scholars on the ground that this verse was revealed in Makkah when Zakāh was not made obligatory. (Zakāh was made obligatory after Hijrah to Madīnah). Ibn Kathīr and other commentators have answered this objection by claiming that Zakāh was in actual fact made obligatory in Makkah as will be evident from Sūrah Al-Muzzammil, which is by consensus a Makkan Sūrah, in which the words وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ (and pay *zakāh*) occur alongside of the words اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ However arrangements for its collection and details regarding the determination of wealth liable to Zakāh (*niṣāb*) were settled after Hijrah to Madīnah. According to this interpretation of the verse Zakāh was made obligatory in Makkah but rules prescribing its various details were formulated in Madīnah. As regards those scholars who hold the view that Zakāh was made obligatory after Hijrah to Madīnah, they believe that

the word must be interpreted here in its common literal sense i.e. to purify one's own self. There is an indication in the verse itself which supports this meaning of the word. It will be observed that wherever obligatory Zakāh has been mentioned in the Qur'ān the words used are 'اِيْتَآءُ الزَّكٰوةِ يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ and اٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ (which refer to the 'payment' of *zakāh*) whereas here the words used are لِلزَّكٰوةِ فَاعِلُوْنَ (who are performers of *zakāh*) which clearly indicates that in this verse the word has not been used in its technical meaning. Besides, the word فَاعِلُوْنَ (performers) is related to فعل (performance) and technically Zakah is not an act but a portion of wealth and the use of the word فَاعِلُوْنَ for this portion of wealth needs suitable explanation. If the technical meaning of the word Zakāh is adopted, then its being obligatory and binding on all Muslims is undisputed and if the word means purification of soul then that too is obligatory and to cleanse one's soul of impurities and sins such as polytheism, hypocrisy, vanity, jealousy, hatred, greed, miserliness is called تَزْكِيَه (*tazkiyah*). All these things are forbidden and are major sins and it is obligatory to purify one's soul from them.

Forth Attribute is guarding ones private parts against unlawful liaison. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ اِلاَّ عَلٰى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ (And who guard their private parts except from their wives or from those (slave-girls) owned by their right hands - 23:5,6). They satisfy their needs with their wives and their legal bondmaids according to the prescribed laws and avoid unlawful liaison. About these people the Qur'ān says فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ (Because they are not liable to blame - 23:6), which also means that the sexual desire must be kept under strict control and must not be allowed to become a means of gratification of one's passions.

فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ (However, those who seek (sexual pleasure) beyond that are the transgressors - 7). Satisfying one's desire with someone other than one's own wife or a lawfully acquired slave-girl is strictly forbidden and the ban includes adultery (marrying a woman whom one is not allowed to marry under the religious code is also adultery), having sex with one's wife or slave-girl when she is menstruating or is confined, or having unnatural sex with them, homosexuality and bestiality, while most jurists include masturbation also in the ban. (Tafsīr Bayān ul-Qur'ān, Qurṭubī, al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, etc.)

Fifth Attribute of a good Muslim is that he should discharge his

trust truly and faithfully. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ (And [success is attained] by those who honestly look after their trusts and covenant, - 23:8). The word أَمَانَات (trusts) covers everything which a person has undertaken to perform or which have been placed under his care as trust. Since it may be of many kinds, the word is used in plural, so that it may include all sorts of trusts whether they may relate to the rights of Allah or to the rights of human beings. To perform scrupulously all the injunctions and duties made obligatory by religious laws and to abstain from things which have been forbidden or declared undesirable is to look after the trust that relates to the rights of Allah. As regards the discharge of trusts relating to the rights of human beings, these take numerous forms, and the most well-known is that a person must promptly return to the owner on demand any goods which have been in his custody as trust. Any information received in confidence is a trust and to reveal it to anybody else without the permission of the person who gave it is a breach of trust. Mutual settlement between an employer and an employee of the terms of employment, i.e. the work to be done and time to be spent in the performance of work, and the wages to be paid is a trust and binding on both the parties and a violation of this agreement by either party would constitute a breach of trust. Hence discharge of trust is an all-encompassing word.

Sixth Attribute of a perfect Muslim is to fulfill his covenant. The word عَهْد (covenant) has two connotations. One is a covenant between two parties specifying the duties and obligations of either party and is binding on both and a breach of this covenant by either party is a fraud and deceit and therefore forbidden in Islam. The other is where a person voluntarily promises to give something to someone or undertakes to do some job. This is known as وَعْدَه (promise) and its fulfillment is also obligatory under the dictates of Sharī'ah. There is a Ḥadīth which says العدة دين (a promise is like a debt). It means that a promise is like a debt and must be fulfilled in the same manner as a debt must be discharged, the difference being that whereas the repayment of a debt can be enforced through a court of law, a voluntary promise is not enforceable likewise. Nevertheless the person making the promise is morally bound to abide by it and failure to do so would be a sin unless there is a religious ground for his inability to fulfill his promise.

Seventh attribute

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ (And who consistently observe their prayers - 23:9). To observe one's prayers here means to offer them regularly at the appointed time, and the word صَلَوَات (Prayers) has been used in the plural form to include all the five prayers. In an earlier verses the word صَلوٰة (Ṣalāh: prayer) was used in the singular because the emphasis was on Khushū' which is the essence of all prayers whether they are *farḍ*, *wājib*, *sunnah* or *nafl*.

A careful study of the above seven attributes would show that they encompass all the duties which man owes to Allah and to fellow men, and all the laws governing those duties. A person who possesses these attributes and adheres to them is a complete *mu'min* (believer) and deserving of *falāḥ* in this world and in the Hereafter. It will also be noted that these seven attributes begin and also end with a reference to prayers which suggests that if prayers are offered in the prescribed manner with all their requirements, the other attributes will appear automatically.

أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ

Those are the inheritors who will inherit Firdaus (Paradise) - 23:10,11.

The good Muslims who possess the attributes described above have been declared in this verse to be the heirs to the garden of Paradise. There is a suggestion here that just as the assets of a deceased person must devolve on his heirs, similarly the possessors of these attributes will, without doubt, enter Paradise. It should be noted that the possessors of these seven qualities have been mentioned in the beginning as those who attain falah or success, then after describing these qualities it is mentioned in this last sentence that possessors of these qualities will inherit Paradise. This indicates that the total *falāḥ* (success) may be achieved in Paradise only.

Verses 12 - 22

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ۚ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنٰهُ خَلْقًا

اٰخَرَ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ لَمَيِّتُوْنَ
﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ
طَرَآئِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً
بِقَدَرٍ فَاَسْكَنّٰهُ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَاِنَّا عَلٰى ذَهَابٍ بِهٖ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾
فَاَنْشَاْنَا لَكُمْ بِهٖ جَنّٰتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيْلٍ وَّاَعْنَابٍ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيْرَةٌ
وَّمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُوْرِ سَيْنَآءَ تَنْۢبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ
وَصِبْغٍ لِّلْاٰكِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا
فِيْ بُطُوْنِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيْرَةٌ وَّمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَعَلَيْهَا
وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And We have created man from an extract of clay. [12] **Then We made him a sperm-drop in a firm resting place.** [13] **Then We made the sperm-drop into a clot, then We turned the clot into a foetus-lump, then We made the foetus-lump into bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh; thereafter We developed it into another creature. So, glorious is Allah, the Best of the creators.** [14] **Then, after all this, you are to die.** [15] **Then you are to be raised again on the Day of Judgment.** [16]

And We created upon you seven paths (heavens) and We were never neglectful of the creation. [17]

And We sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We lodged it in the earth, and of course, We are able to take it away. [18] **Then We produced with it gardens of date-palms and vines for your benefit. For you there are many fruits in them, and of them you eat** [19] **– and (We produced) a tree (of olive) that comes out from the (mount) Ṭūr of Sinai, which grows having oil and a dressing for those who eat.** [20]

And indeed there is a sure lesson in the cattle for you. We give you a drink from that which lies in their bellies, and for you there are many benefits in them,

and of them you eat, [21] **and on them and on the boats you are transported.** [22]

Commentary

In the earlier verses it was explained that man can achieve *falāḥ* (success) in this world and in the Hereafter by spending his time in assiduously worshipping Allah and, in compliance with His commands, by keeping his body and soul pure at all times and by discharging the claims and duties which he owes to fellow human beings. The present verse gives an account of the universal and supreme power of Allah the Almighty and a manifestation of His power in the process leading to the creation of the human race. If a person whom Allah has given wisdom and intelligence ponders seriously the meanings of these verses, he must necessarily choose the path which would lead him to *falāḥ* in this world and in the Hereafter.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ

And We have created man from an extract of clay. - 23:12

The word سُلَالَة *sulālah* means "extract" and طِيْن means "wet earth" or clay and the verse means that man was created from some special elements extracted from earth. Creation of mankind began with Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام who was himself created from this essence of earth. Therefore the first creation has been related to earth after which the seed of one man becomes the means of another man's creation. In the next verse ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً (then We made him a sperm-drop) this same point has been mentioned differently. The meaning of all this is that the first life i.e. Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was created from earth and continued further with the sperm which is a refined element of the same earth. This is how a majority of commentators have explained this verse. Another view is that سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ (extract of clay) may also mean human seed because it is produced from the food which a man takes and the food grows out of the earth.

Seven stages of the creation of man

In the above verse seven stages in the creation of man have been described. These are:

(1) سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ (an extract of clay).

(2) نُطْفَة (sperm-drop),

(3) عَلَقَه (clot),

(4) مُضْغَه (foetus-lump),

(5) عِظَام (bones),

(6) clothing bones with flesh, and

(7) completion of the process of creation by blowing the spirit into the child.

A very interesting story about Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ

Qurṭubī in his commentary has related a very interesting story in which Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ is said to have determined the exact date of the Night of Majesty (لَيْلَةُ القدر) and based his reasoning on this verse: The story goes likes this. One day Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ while sitting in the company of some eminent companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, asked them on what date of the month of Ramaḍān the Night of Majesty (Lailatulqadr) would fall. None of them was able to mention a specific date so they all said that only Allah knew the answer. Sayyidnā Umar ﷺ then turned to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ who was the youngest among them and asked him if he had an answer to the question. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ then said, "O Amir ul-Mominin! Allah created seven skies and seven earths. He created man in seven stages and provided him sustenance from seven sources. Therefore in my opinion the Night of Majesty (لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْر) will surely fall on the twenty-seventh night of the month of Ramaḍān." When Sayyidnā Umar ﷺ heard this reasoning, he said to the companions, "See, this lad has given an answer which none of you could give". This story is reproduced at length in the Musnād of Ibn Abi Shaibah. When Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ mentioned the seven stages of man's creation, he was obviously alluding to this verse. As for the seven sources of human sustenance, the reference is to the verse in Sūrah 'Abas:

فَاَنْبَتْنَا فِيْهَا حَبًّا وَّعِنَبًا وَّقَضْبًا وَّزَيْتُوْنًا وَّنَخْلاً وَّ حَدَآئِقَ غُلْبًا وَّفَاكِهَةً وَّاَبًّا

> And therein made the grains to grow and vines, and reeds, and olives, and palms, and clense-tree gardens, and fruits, and pastures. 90:27 - 31

This verse mentions eight items of which the first seven are food for human beings and the eighth provides fodder for animals.

The supreme beauty and eloquence of the Qur'ānic language is evident from the fact that the seven stages of the creation of man have not all been described in the same manner. In describing the metamorphosis of the human foetus from one stage to the next, the word ثُمَّ (afterwards) has been used at some place which is a suggestion of some delay in the process, while at other places the particle فَ has been used as a prefix indicating uninterrupted succession in the process of change. Some of the changes in the human foetus in mother's womb take a long time to take place whereas other changes occur in relatively shorter periods. Thus the word ثُمَّ has been used in the context of the first two changes. First there is سُلَالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ (an extract of clay) which changes into the seed ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً (then We made him a sperm-drop). Now it is well known that the production of food from the earth, its absorption in the human body of that special element which changes into the seed is a long drawn out process. Similarly the third stage of the transformation from the sperm-drop نُطْفَة to clot مُضْغَة takes a long time to materialize and has been described by the Qur'ān in the words ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً (then We made the sperm-drop into a clot - 23:14). The next three stages, i.e. from عَلَقَة (clot) to مُضْغَة (foetus-lump), from مُضْغَة to bones, and thirdly clothing flesh on bones occurring in short periods is not too remote a possibility, and in describing these three changes the particle فَ has been used which, as has been explained earlier, is indicative of uninterrupted succession. The final change in the condition of the unborn child comes when life and soul are breathed into it. And since, according to human reckoning, putting life and soul into a lifeless mass must necessarily take a long time, therefore, here again the word ثُمَّ has been used to describe this final stage of transformation.

The final stage in human creation, i.e. putting life and soul into it

The Qur'ān describes this change with the words ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ (We developed it into another creature - 23:14). This distinction is due to the fact that whereas the first six stages in the creation of man are related to the world of elements and substances, the final stage relates to the transfer of soul from the world of spirits into his body and is, therefore, described as خَلْقًا آخَرَ , i.e. a special or distinct creation.

Biological spirit and Real Spirit

"We developed it into another creature" in this verse is interpreted by Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Sha'bi, 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk and Abul-'Aliyah to mean

blowing spirit into the body. Tafsīr Maẓharī mentions that most probably it refers to the biological spirit. According to its explanation spirits are of two kinds. Biological spirit is a subtle substance embedded in every part of the body of a human being or an animal. This is the spirit recognized by medical scientists and the philosophers. This biological spirit is created after the organs are created. That is why its creation is mentioned in this verse with the word ثُمَّ (thereafter). The other kind of spirit is the 'Real spirit'. It belongs to the spiritual universe. This real spirit was created long before the creation of human beings, and it is these spirits which were assembled by Allah when He asked them, "Am I not your Lord?" and they answered, "Why not?" This Real Spirit having been created long before, is connected by Allah Ta'ālā with biological spirit in a manner not known to anyone. Life of man depends on this connection and when biological spirit of a person is disconnected from Real Spirit, he dies. Therefore, it is also possible that it is this connection which is referred to in this verse by the words another creation.

فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ (So, glorious is Allah, the best of the creators-23:14). The word خَلْق and تَخْلِيْق mean "to create something from nothing", which is a very special and exclusive attribute of Allah. Thus, Allah alone is the creator and none else. Neither an angel nor man can create anything. However sometime these two words are used in the sense of manufacturing which is no more than the reshaping and assembly by man of substances created by Allah. The man who does this is also called the creator of an article. The Qur'ān says تَخْلُقُوْنَ اِفْكًا (you invent a lie-29:17), and again it says about Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام اَنِّیْٓ اَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّيْنِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ (I create for you from clay something in the shape of a bird - 3:49). In all these places the word خَلْق (creating) has been used in the metaphorical sense to mean "manufacture".

Here the word خَالِقِيْن (creators) has been used in the plural and the meaning is that though ordinary human beings who manufacture things may also be called خَالِق or creators in the metaphorical sense, yet Allah is the best among all those creators.

ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ لَمَيِّتُوْنَ

Then, after all this, you are to die - 23:15

The preceding three verses were about the creation of man and this

verse and the one which follows is about the life to come. In this verse Allah says that after his creation man will spend a period of time in this world and then will meet his death from which there is no escape. Then He says that man will be raised on the Day of Resurrection ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تُبْعَثُوْنَ (Then you are to be raised again on the Day of Judgment - 23:16) so that his deeds and actions in this world may be weighed and he may be sent to Paradise or Hell as he deserves. This is how a man's life would end. Further on there is a brief mention of the events which will take place in the intervening period between his life in this world and the life to come, and of the gift and blessings which Allah will bestow upon him. This is prefaced by a reference to the creation of the skies.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَآئِقَ

And We created upon you seven paths (heavens) - 23:17

طَرَآئِقَ is the plural of طَرِيْقَة which may also be used as a synonym for طَبَقه (tier) in which case the meaning would be that Allah created seven skies overhead row upon row in tiers. The other and more common meaning of the word طَرِيْقه is "road" or "passage" in which case the verse would mean that these skies provide a path for the angels who bring commands from Allah to the earth.

وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غٰفِلِيْنَ (And We were never neglectful of the creation - 23:17). The verse means that Allah did not just abandon man after creating him, but was ever mindful of his needs and provided the means for his sustenance and growth. To this end He first created the skies and from the skies He sent forth rains upon the earth which then produced food for men's nourishment.

The Divine system of providing water to meet human needs

وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۢ بِقَدَرٍ فَاَسْكَنّٰهُ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۖ وَاِنَّا عَلٰى ذَهَابٍ ۢ بِهٖ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ

And We sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We lodged it in the earth, and of course, We are able to take it away. - 23:18

The addition of the phrase بقدر (In due measure) shows how feeble and utterly powerless man is, because if the very things without which no life can exist exceed a certain limit, they become the cause of death and destruction. Water is a case in point without which no living thing - man

or beast - can survive. Torrential rains coming down from the sky cause a deluge which becomes a source of misery for human beings. But Allah is kind and merciful and He sends rains which, while fulfilling man's needs, do not turn into flood except at those places where it is His will that they should be engulfed in water. Another point to consider is that if man was to obtain his daily requirement of water through daily rainfall, that too would cause extreme discomfort and suffering, because he is not by nature adapted to live in an environment where rain falls every day. Moreover the conduct of business would become impossible in such conditions. On the other hand, if the total quantity of water that men would need for a whole year, or for six months or even for three months were to come down in a single downpour and people are told to store their quota of water and use it according to their daily needs, that would be an impossible task because, apart from lack of adequate storage capacity, the water would become foul and unfit for consumption. Therefore Allah has regulated the supply of water in such a way that when rains come, the water saturates the earth and the plants and then it flows into lakes, ponds and natural depressions where it is used by men and animals according to their needs. But the water stored in this manner can only last for a limited time and men of different regions need a continuous supply of fresh water. To meet this eventuality Allah has designed a system by which very large quantities of water are converted into oceans of ice and snow and placed on top of mountains where the atmosphere is pure and free from pollution. Slowly and gradually the snow melts and the water seeps through the pores in the mountains and flows into the network of underground water channels which carry it to all parts as springs and flow on the surface of the earth as streams, water courses and rivers. This fresh running water provides drinking water to men and animals and irrigates fields which yield food and fodder for all living things. Another part of the water percolates deep into the ground and becomes sub-soil water and is drawn up from wells. This entire design and process is covered in the Qur'ān by a simple and short sentence فَاَسْكَنّٰهُ فِی الْاَرْضِ (23:18). A point is also made at the end of the verse that the sub-soil water which is drawn from wells has been placed by merciful Allah at a depth from where it can be drawn easily because by its nature, water flows downwards and could have gone down to a depth from where it would have been impossible to draw it out. This is explained by the

sentence وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ ذَهَابٍۭ بِهٖ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ and, of course, We are able to take it away(23:18).

The Qur'ān then goes on to say that it is from an assured and regular supply of water only that Allah created fruit gardens which produce dates and grapes and many other kinds of fruits. People eat these fruit for their taste and flavour and also preserve some of them for future use as articles of food as is evident from the sentence وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُوْنَ (And of them you eat - 23:19). Then special mention is made of olives and the oil extracted from it because it has many uses and offers many benefits. And since the Mount Sinai produces an abundant crop of olives therefore a reference has been made to it وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُوْرِ سَيْنَآءَ (And [We produced] a tree [of olive] that comes out from the [mount] Ṭūr of Sinai. - 23:20). Sinai is the name of the area where the Ṭūr Mountain is located. Olive oil can be used to massage the body, in lamps to provide light and in food as a curry or dressing. This has been expressed in the verse in the words. تَنْبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَ صِبْغٍ لِّلْاٰكِلِيْنَ (which grows having oil and a dressing for those who eat - 23:20). The reason why olive tree has been associated with the Ṭūr mountain is that this tree first grew on that mountain. Some people have said that it was the first tree to grow on earth after the great Deluge in the days of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. (Maẓharī)

Then there is a mention of the blessings and the numerous gifts which Allah has provided for the benefit of mankind so that they may ponder and worship Him. The words of the verse are وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً (And indeed there is a sure lesson in the cattle for you - 23:21). The lesson to which this verse refers has been described further in the words نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهَا (We give you a drink from that which lies in their bellies - 23:21). Some of the ways in which the cattle serve mankind are that they provide milk which is a very clear and nourishing food; every part of their body is put to some use, and their wool, hides, intestines etc. are all utilized, in industries which support a country's economy, the meat of the animals, which are *ḥalāl* (permissible) is a favourite food for all men. وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُوْنَ (and of them you eat - 23:21). And finally they are used, together with ships, as mounts and as means of transporting goods from one place to another. In the last benefit, ships and boats are also included, because they are also used in transportation وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ (And on them and on the boats you are transported - 23:22). All types of mounts which

are run with wheels may also be added to *fulk* (boats) because they render the same service.

Verses 23 - 30

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ مَا هَٰذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَن يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً مَّا سَمِعْنَا بِهَٰذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا بِهِ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنِ اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِن كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُم مُّغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنتَ وَمَن مَّعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّانَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُل رَّبِّ أَنزِلْنِي مُنزَلًا مُّبَارَكًا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنزِلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ وَإِن كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And surely, We sent Nūḥ to his nation. So he said, "O my people, worship Allah. You have no god whatsoever other than Him. So, do you not fear Allah?" [23] **So, said the disbelieving chiefs from among his nation, "This (man) is nothing but a human being like you. He wishes to impose his superiority over you. Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels. We have not heard of such a thing among our forefathers.** [24] **He is none but a man possessed by madness, so wait for (what happens to) him, for some time"** [25]

He said, "My Lord, help me, for they have belied me." [26] **So, We sent Our revelation to him, saying, "Make the**

ship under Our eyes and Our revelation. So, when Our command comes and the oven gushes forth, take on its board a pair of two from each (species) along with your family, except those of them against whom the word has already passed. And do not speak to Me (in favour) of those who did wrong. They are sure to be drowned. [27] **So, when you and those with you, are well seated in the ship, say, 'Praise is for Allah who saved us from the wrongdoing people.'** [28] **And say, 'My Lord, make me land a blessed landing. And You are the best of those who bring (someone) to land".** [29]

Surely, there are signs in it and We do always test (people). [30]

وَفَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ (And the oven gushes forth - 23:27). The word تَنُّوْر means oven which is used for making flat, round bread, and is also used in the sense of the whole earth. According to some people تَنُّوْر is a specific oven in the Kūfah mosque, while others believe that it was somewhere in Syria. Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام was informed by Allah that when water began boiling forth from the تَنُّوْر (oven) that would be the sign of the coming of the Deluge (Maẓharī). The story of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام , the Deluge and his Ark has been reported in some earlier Sūrahs (See Volume 4, p. 626 to 643).

Verses 31 - 41

ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْهُمْ
اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ
مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِلِقَآءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ وَاَتْرَفْنٰهُمْ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ۙ مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۙ يَاْكُلُ مِمَّا تَاْكُلُوْنَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا
تَشْرَبُوْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ ۙ اِنَّكُمْ اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾
اَيَعِدُكُمْ اَنَّكُمْ اِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا اَنَّكُمْ مُّخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾
هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾ اِنْ هِىَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ

وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُثَاءً فَبُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

Then after them We created another generation, [31] **and sent among them a messenger from themselves (to convey the message): "Worship Allah; you have no god whatsoever than Him. So do you not fear Allah?"** [32] **So said those chiefs of his nation who disbelieved and belied facing the Hereafter and whom We made affluent in the worldly life, "This (man) is nothing but a human being. He eats from what you eat from, and drinks from what you drink.** [33] **And if you obey a human like you, you will be absolute losers.** [34] **Does he promise you that, when you die and are turned into dust and bones, you are to be brought forth?** [35] **Far too improbable is what you are being promised.** [36] **There is nothing but our worldly life. We die and we live and we are not to be raised again.** [37] **He is nothing but a man who has forged a lie against Allah and we are not going to believe in him."** [38]

He said, "My Lord, help me, for they have belied me." [39] **He (Allah) said, "In a little while they have to become remorseful."** [40] **So the Cry seized them according to the true (promise), and We turned them in to scum. So, woe to the wrongdoing people.** [41]

In the earlier verses the story of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام was told who was sent to his people to guide them along the path of righteousness and the following verses contain a brief account of some other prophets without mentioning their names and the people for whose guidance they were sent. From certain references and allusions the commentators have concluded that the verses refer to Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام or Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام who were sent for the guidance of the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd respectively. In the present story both these tribes are reported to have perished as a result of صَيْحَة (Cry) from an unseen source, whereas in other verses it has been specifically mentioned that it was the tribe of

Thamūd which perished from صَيْحَة (Cry) and this had led some scholars to the view that the words قَرْنًا آخَرِيْنَ (another generation) refers to Thamūd. An alternative explanation is that the word صَيْحَة (Cry) has been used in the general sense of punishment from Allah in which case it would include the tribe of 'Ād also.

اِنْ هِىَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوْثِيْنَ

There is nothing but our worldly life. We die and we live and we are not to be raised again. - 23:37

This is the argument which the unbelievers advance when denying belief in the Day of Judgment. Those who deny it publicly are confirmed infidels, but it is very unfortunate that many Muslims also act in a manner that the same denial can be felt from their deeds and actions. They seem to be totally oblivious of the coming in of the Hereafter. May Allah Ta'ala grant them faith to release themselves from the clutches of this belief of theirs.

Verses 42 - 50

ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُوْنًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾ ثُمَّ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا ؕ كُلَّمَا جَآءَ اُمَّةً رَّسُوْلُهَا كَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَّجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ ۚ فَبُعْدًا لِّقَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۴۴﴾ ثُمَّ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى وَاَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ ۙ بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۴۵﴾ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا عَالِيْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾ فَقَالُوْٓا اَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عٰبِدُوْنَ ﴿۴۷﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَكَانُوْا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِيْنَ ﴿۴۸﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿۴۹﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَاُمَّهٗٓ اٰيَةً وَّاٰوَيْنٰهُمَآ اِلٰى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَّمَعِيْنٍ ﴿۵۰﴾

Then, after them, We created another generation. [42] **No community can go ahead of its appointed time, nor can they stay behind.** [43] **Thereafter, We sent Our**

messengers successively. Whenever a community was approached by its messenger they belied him. Then We made some of them follow others (in destruction) and turned them into tales (of history). So, woe to a people who do not believe. [44]

Thereafter, We sent Mūsā and his brother Hārūn, with Our signs and a clear proof [45] towards Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and his advisors. But they showed arrogance and they were haughty people. [46] So they said, "shall we believe in two humans who are like ourselves and whose people are serving us as slaves?" [47] Thus they belied both of them and were among the destroyed. [48] And, of course, We gave Mūsā the Book, so that they may take the right path. [49]

And We made the son of Maryam (Mary) and his mother a sign and gave them shelter on a height, a place of rest and running springs. [50]

Commentary

وَّاٰوَيْنٰهُمَآ اِلٰى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَّمَعِيْنٍ (and We gave them shelter on a height, a place of rest and running springs). According to Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, this verse refers to the event that a tyrant was resolute to kill Sayyidnā 'Īsā and his mother عليهما السلام right from his childhood. They escaped from him and, with Allah's grace, found a place on a height where they enjoyed a peaceful life until Sayyidnā 'Īsā ﷺ attained maturity and was entrusted with prophethood. (This commentary is taken from Khulasa-e-tafsīr of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān).

Verses 51 - 56

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ؕ اِنِّىْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَاِنَّ هٰذِهٖٓ اُمَّتُكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّاَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَتَقَطَّعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا ؕ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۢ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ فِىْ غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ اَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِى الْخَيْرٰتِ ؕ بَلْ لَّا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾

O messengers, eat from the good things, and act righteously. Of whatever you do, I am fully aware. [51]

And surely, this is your creed, a single creed, and I am your Lord. So fear Me. [52] **But they split up ways from one another (dividing themselves) into factions, each faction happy with what lies before it.** [53] **So leave them in their negligence for some time.** [54]

Do they think that by consistently providing them with wealth and children, [55] **We are accelerating the (real) good things to them? The fact, however, is that they do not understand (the reality).** [56]

Commentary

يَاأَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا (O messengers, eat from the good things and act, righteously - 23:51.) The word طَيِّبَات means pure and good things. Since things which are forbidden under the Islamic laws are neither pure nor desirable for people who are gifted with common sense, it follows that the word طَيِّبَات refers only to the things which are permitted under the Islamic Shari'ah and which are not only good in appearance, but also pure in their intrinsic nature. This verse also tells us that all the prophets were enjoined by Allah to do two things - eat food which is clean and permissible under Shariah, and to do good deeds, and considering that these injunctions have been addressed to prophets who are impeccable in any case, it is necessary that their followers should strive hard to mould their lives according to these injunctions. This in fact is the real meaning of this verse.

Scholars have expressed the view that the Juxtaposition of these two commands points to the fact that the consumption of lawful food has a very important bearing on human actions and when a person takes lawful food only, a divine guidance takes his actions along the path of righteousness. But if the food is unlawful, then serious obstacles will prevent the accomplishment of good deeds in spite of his best intentions. According to a *ḥadīth*, people travel long wearing miles and are covered with dust and they pray to Allah with hands upraised calling out "O Lord, O Lord!" But since they eat forbidden things and their clothes are also made from forbidden material, there is little hope of their prayers being granted. (Qurṭubī) Thus it is evident that a person hoping that his worship will get him the pleasure of Allah or that his prayers will be granted by

Him must pay scrupulous attention to what he eats and must, at all times, avoid eating unlawful things.

وَاِنَّ هٰذِهٖٓ اُمَّتُكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً (And surely this is your creed, a single creed - 23:52). The word امّه is used to describe a group or the followers of a prophet. Sometimes it is also used in the sense of "faith", "creed" or "way of life", as in the verse وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا عَلٰٓى اُمَّةٍ (We found our fathers upon a creed - 43:22). In the present verse the word *ummah* has been used in the latter sense.

فَتَقَطَّعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا (But they split up ways from one another (dividing themselves) into factions - 23:53). The word زُبُر is the plural of زَبُوْر meaning a book, and the verse would mean that Allah had commanded all prophets and their followers to adhere to the one and only faith revealed by Him in all matters relating to the basic principles and beliefs. But the followers of different prophets split up into groups and sects and each one of them chose a different way of life and adopted a different book in which the beliefs of each group and sect were recorded. Sometimes زبر is used for the plural of زُبْرَه (*zubrah*) meaning "fragment" or "group". This meaning is more appropriate here and the meaning of the verse would be that these people were divided into sects even in the matter of fundamental beliefs of their religion. It should be noted that the difference of opinion among the *mujtahidīn* (competent Sharī'ah Scholars) in some minor issues is not included in this division which is condemned in this verse, because these differences do not cause a division of the religion, nor do the people maintaining these differences become separate sects. Giving these interpretative and subsidiary differences a sectarian colour is the height of ignorance and no religious scholar would support it.

Verses 57 - 62

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۵۸﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۵۹﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْتُوْنَ مَآ اٰتَوْا وَّقُلُوْبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ اَنَّهُمْ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿۶۰﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُسٰرِعُوْنَ فِى الْخَيْرٰتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سٰبِقُوْنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ وَلَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتٰبٌ يَّنْطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۶۲﴾

(Contrarily) those who are anxious out of awe of their Lord, [57] **and those who believe in the verses of their Lord** [58] **and those who do not associate any partner to their Lord,** [59] **And those who give whatever they give with their hearts full of fear that to their Lord they are to return** [60] **– those people are accelerating towards the (real) good things, and they are the foremost to attain them.** [61]

We do not place a burden on anyone except to his capability. And with Us is a book which speaks with truth, and they shall not be wronged. [62]

Commentary

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْتُوْنَ مَآ اٰتَوْا وَّقُلُوْبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ (And those who give whatever they give with their hearts full of fear - 23:60.) The word يُؤْتُوْنَ is derived from ایتاء meaning "to give, to spend", and is used in commentaries in the sense of صَدَقَات(alms to the poor). Another reading of this verse reported from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا is يَأْتُوْنَ مَا أَتَوْا (They do whatever they do - 23:60) and this covers all good deeds such as charity, prayers, fasting etc. As for the generally accepted reading of the verse, although it mentions alms to the poor only, yet it would include all good deeds also as is borne out by a *ḥadīth*. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ the meaning of this verse whether those who do these deeds are the ones who drink wine and steal things. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "O daughter of Ṣiddīq ؓ ! It is not as you say. These are the people who observe fasts, say their prayers and give alms, yet they are apprehensive lest, due to some mind lapse on their part, all their good deeds may not be accepted by Allah. They hasten to do good deeds and are foremost, in accomplishing them." (Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Maẓharī)

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī says that he knew people who did virtuous deeds, yet were more fearful than people who committed evil deeds. (Qurṭubī)

أُولٰٓئِكَ يُسَارِعُوْنَ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سٰبِقُوْنَ

Those people are accelerating towards the (real) good things, and they are the foremost to attain them. - 23:61

The meaning of مُسَارَعَتْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ is that just as ordinary human beings run after worldly gains and try to leave other competitors behind, these good and virtuous people strive to gain spiritual reward and try to excel

others in their efforts to fulfill their religious obligations.

Verses 63 - 77

بَلْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَةٍ مِّنْ هٰذَا وَلَهُمْ اَعْمَالٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا
عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ حَتّٰۤى اِذَاۤ اَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهِمْ بِالْعَذَابِ اِذَا هُمْ يَجْئَرُوْنَ
﴿٦٤﴾ لَا تَجْئَرُوا الْيَوْمَ اِنَّكُمْ مِّنَّا لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَدْ كَانَتْ اٰيٰتِيْ
تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلٰۤى اَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنْكِصُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ
بِهٖ سٰمِرًا تَهْجُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ اَمْ جَآءَهُمْ مَّا لَمْ يَاْتِ
اٰبَآءَهُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوْا رَسُوْلَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾
اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَآءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ
﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ
فِيْهِنَّ بَلْ اَتَيْنٰهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ اَمْ
تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَّهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَاِنَّكَ
لَتَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَاِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ
عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنٰكِبُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَلَوْ رَحِمْنٰهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ مِّنْ ضُرٍّ
لَّلَجُّوْا فِيْ طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا
اسْتَكَانُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا ذَا
عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدٍ اِذَا هُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾

But their hearts are in ignorance about this, and they have deeds, other than that, which they are continuously doing. [63] **Until when We will seize their affluent ones with punishment, they will suddenly start crying.** [64] **"Do not cry today. You will not be helped by Us.** [65] **My verses used to be recited to you, but you used to turn back on your heels** [66] **in arrogance,**

making it a subject of tales at night, talking nonsense (about it)." [67] (1)

Then, is it that they did not ponder over the Word (of Allah) or there has come to them something that did not come to their forefathers? [68] **Or did they not recognize their messenger and therefore they denied him?** [69] **Or do they say, 'He is possessed by madness?' Instead, the fact is that he has come to them with truth, but it is the truth that most of them dislike.** [70]

And had the truth followed their desires, all the heavens and the earth and all those therein would have fallen in total disorder. However, We have brought to them their advice, but it is their advice that they are averse to. [71]

Or is it that you (O Muhammad) demand a remuneration from them? But the remuneration from your Lord is best, and He is the best of all givers. [72] **And surely you are inviting them to a straight path,** [73] **and those who do not believe in the Hereafter are surely the deviators from the Path.** [74]

And if We have mercy on them and remove whatever distress they have, they would still persist obstinately in their rebellion, wandering blindly. [75] **And We have already seized them with punishment, but they did not turn humble to their Lord, nor do they supplicate in humility,** [76] **until when We will open against them the door of a severe punishment, they will be taken aback in despair.** [77]

Commentary

بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ (But their hearts are in ignorance) Lexically غَمْرَة means deep water where a person may drown or be overwhelmed. For this reason the word is also used to signify a covering or something that conceals an object. In this verse the word means the ignorance in which the hearts of the infidels are submerged and hidden so that no light can

1). Another possible translation of this verse may be as follows: 'but you used to turn back on your heels, being over-proud of it (the *ḥarām* being looked after by you), indulging in tales at night, talking nonsense." It is this second translation on which the forthcoming explanation is based.

reach them.

وَلَهُمْ اَعْمَالٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِكَ

And they have deeds, other then that - 23:63

It means that in addition to their rejection of the Oneness of Allah, and their denial of the true faith, they engage themselves in other sinful deeds.

مُتْرَفِيْهِمْ (their affluent ones - 23:64). The word مُتْرَف is derived from تَرَف meaning comfort and prosperity. This verse mentions the Divine punishment which will descend upon the unbelievers whether rich or poor. The rich people have been specially mentioned here because they are the ones who make adequate arrangements to protect themselves against disasters and misfortunes. But when retribution comes from Allah, they find themselves totally helpless. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ the punishment which is mentioned in this verse is an allusion to the crushing defeat which the infidels of Makkah suffered at the hands of the Muslims in the Battle of Badr. Some others say that the reference is to the severe famine which afflicted the people of Makkah as a result of the curse laid on them by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, when they were forced to eat dead animals and cats and dogs.

Although the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions, when faced ill-treatment from the infidels, used to remain patient and never complained yet when their suffering and torment became unbearable, the Holy Prophet invoked divine punishment for the infidels in the following words:

اللّٰهمّ اشدد وطأتك على مضر واجعلها عليهم سنين كسنى يوسف (رواه البخاری و مسلم) (قرطبی و مظهری)

(O Lord! Let thy punishment descend hard on the tribe of Muḍar and make their land barren like the land of Yūsuf.

مُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ بِهٖ سٰمِرًا تَهْجُرُوْنَ (Being over-proud of it (the *ḥarām*), indulging in tales at night talking non-sense). According to many commentators the word بِهٖ (on it) in this verse has a reference to the *ḥarām* (the sanctuary of Makkah). Although there is no specific mention of the *ḥarām* in the verse, yet the very close association of the Quraish of Makkah with it and their great pride in this association renders a specific mention of the *ḥarām*

unnecessary. The purpose of the verse, therefore, is to mention the causes of their aversion against Allah's verses. The first factor was their pride in their being the neighbors and care-takers of *ḥarām*. The other two factors are mentioned in the next two words.

The word سَامِرًا is derived from سَمَر meaning "Moon lit night". It was a favourite pastime with the Arabs to assemble on moon lit nights and tell stories. Thus the word سَمَر came to be used in the sense of stories and anecdotes and سَامِر meant a raconteur. Although the word has been used in the singular yet it is often used as a plural also as in this verse. This word points out the second reason for the repudiation of divine communications by the infidels of Makkah which is their preoccupation with petty and frivolous matters such as story-telling and their lack of interest in divine messages. And finally there was a third reason for this state of affairs also namely that they used to indulge in foolish talk and pass unseemly remarks about the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The word تَهْجُرُوْنَ (23:67) is derived from هُجر with a *ḍammah* mark (ُ) on the letter ه and means "to speak nonsense, to use foul language).

Ban on story-telling after 'Ishā' prayers

Story telling was favourite pastime among the Arabs and the Persians since ancient times. This habit was not only time wasting but was also the cause of certain evils. With a view to discourage this practice, the Holy Prophet ﷺ enjoined upon the Muslims not to sleep before the 'Ishā' prayers. The philosophy behind this injunction was that all daily human activity ended with the 'Ishā' prayers which should arguably be a man's last action and which might even atone for his lapses during the day. On the other hand if, after the 'Ishā' prayers, he sits down to while away his time listening to silly and frivolous tales which in itself is a foolish act, he renders himself guilty of encouraging falsehood, back-biting and other sins. Another consequence of this evil habit is that such a person will go to bed late, will rise late and miss his early morning prayers. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ used to admonish people whom he found listening to stories after 'Ishā' prayers and advised them to go early to bed so that with Allah's grace they might be enabled to say midnight prayers. (Qurṭubī)

The verses 68, 69 and 70 mention five reasons which might possibly have prevented the unbelievers from accepting the faith brought by the

Holy Prophet ﷺ, and also give a rebuttal of each of these causes. Thus on the one hand all the arguments advanced by the infidels for not accepting the true faith have been demolished, and on the other hand there are compelling grounds and irrefutable evidence which should convince any right minded person of his error and persuade him to accept the message brought by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Their persistence in their unbelief is, therefore, the result of their unreasoning hatred towards and blind prejudice against the Holy Prophet ﷺ to which a reference has been made in the latter part of the verse بَلْ جَآءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ (Instead, the fact is that he has come to them with truth, but it is the truth that most of them dislike - 23:70). In other words, there being no valid and rational ground for repudiating the mission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ their opposition may be explained by their dislike of truth and their unwillingness to pay heed to its message. This, no doubt, is due to their love for undisputed power and their reluctance to share it with anyone else.

اَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوْا رَسُوْلَهُمْ

Or did they not recognize their messenger? - 23:69.

One reason for their denial of the true faith could have been if the message was brought to them by an outsider who was a stranger to them and with whose character and antecedents they were unfamiliar. But this argument could not be invoked in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who belonged to the noble family of Quraish, was born in Makkah, grew up among them, and his whole life was like an open book before them. Before prophethood was bestowed upon him, he was known among the unbelievers of Makkah as اَمِيْن (trustworthy) and صَادِق (truthful) and nobody had ever raised an accusing finger on his character and general behavior. Thus they could not take the plea that their repudiation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and of the message brought to him was due to their ignorance about him or about his family connections.

وَلَقَدْ اَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُوْنَ

And We have already seized them with punishment, but they did not turn humble to their Lord, nor do they supplicate in humility. (23:76)

In the preceding verse it has been stated that when the unbelievers are subjected to chastisement for their sins, they plead to Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ for mercy and when Allah who is Merciful relieves their

suffering, they return to their evil practices and wicked deeds. This verse relates a similar instance when the unbelievers were punished for their misdeeds. However when they were delivered from their sufferings as a result of the intercession by the Holy Prophet ﷺ on their behalf, they did not humble themselves before Allah but persisted in idolatry and unbelief.

Visitation of famine upon Makkah and its deliverance on the prayers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

It has been mentioned earlier that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had prayed to Allah to punish the people of Makkah with famine and as a result they were reduced to great straits and were forced to eat dead animals. At last, Abū Sufyān presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ at Madīnah and said, "I appeal you in the name of Allah, did you not say that you had been sent by Him as mercy for the whole world?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "Yes I did, and what I said is true also." Then Abū Sufyān said, "You killed the leaders of your clan with sword at the battle of Badr and now you are killing those who still survive with starvation. Pray to Allah, I beseech you, to remove this curse from over our heads." The Holy Prophet ﷺ then prayed to Allah to forgive the people of Makkah and deliver them from the agony of hunger, and his prayer was granted forthwith. The verse: وَلَقَدْ اَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ (23:76) was revealed on this occasion and refers to this incident. (Maẓharī)

Verses 78 - 92

وَهُوَ الَّذِيٓ اَنْشَاَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْئِدَةَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا
تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ ذَرَاَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَاِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ
﴿٧٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلَافُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ ؕ اَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ بَلْ قَالُوْا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوْٓا ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا
وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَاٰبَآؤُنَا
هٰذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ لِّمَنِ الْاَرْضُ
وَمَنْ فِيْهَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ
﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ۚ قُلْ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنْ ۢ بِيَدِهٖ مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ يُجِيْرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
لِلّٰهِ ۚ قُلْ فَاَنّٰى تُسْحَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بَلْ اَتَيْنٰهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ
﴿٩٠﴾ مَا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ وَّمَا كَانَ مَعَهٗ مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ
اِلٰهٍ ۢ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ۚ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ
﴿٩١﴾ عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾

And He is the One who created for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. Little you are grateful. [78] **And He is the One who created you on the earth and it is He unto whom you will be gathered together.** [79] **And He is the One who gives life and brings death and it is He to whom belongs the alternation of night and day. So, do you not understand?** [80]

But they said like what the earlier people had said. [81] **They said, "Is it that, when we will die and become dust and bones--is it that we will be raised again?** [82] **This is what we and our fathers had been promised with before. It is nothing but the tales of the ancients."** [83] **Say, "Whose is the earth and all those therein if you have knowledge?"** [84] **They will say, "Allah's." Would you still pay no heed?** [85]

Say, "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Great Throne?" [86] **They will say, "(All this belongs) to Allah". Say, "Would you still not fear Allah?"** [87] **Say, "Who is the One in whose hand lies the kingdom of every thing and who gives protection and no protection can be given against him, if you have knowledge?"** [88] **They will say, "(All this belongs) to Allah." Say, "Then from where are you being bewitched?"** [89]

The fact is that We have brought to them The Truth, and they are absolute liars. [90] **Allah did not take to a son, nor was there any god with Him. Had there been so, every god would have taken away what he created and each one of them would have been aggressive**

against the other. Pure is Allah from what they describe. [91] **He is the Knower of the hidden and the manifest. So, He is far higher than their ascribing of partners to Him.** [92]

Commentary

وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ (And who gives protection and no protection can be given against him - 23:88) The meaning of the verse is that Allah alone can deliver a person from pain and suffering as He wills, but there is none who can save a person from divine punishment. This is true of this world because nobody can stop Allah from rewarding virtuous people nor can anyone protect someone whom He chooses to punish. And the same is true of the Hereafter also. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 93 - 100

قُلْ رَّبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيَنِّى مَا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِى فِى الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰٓ أَن نُّرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقٰدِرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ ۚ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزٰتِ الشَّيٰطِينِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٩٨﴾ حَتّٰىٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّىٓ أَعْمَلُ صٰلِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ ۚ كَلَّآ ۚ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا ۚ وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

(O prophet) say (in prayer), "O my Lord, if You are to show me (in my life) that (punishment) which they (the infidels) are threatened with, [93] **then, my Lord, do not place me among the wrongdoing people."** [94] **And of course, We do have the power to show you what We threatened them with.** [95]

Repel evil with that which is best. We are well aware of what they describe. [96] **And say, "O my Lord, I seek your refuge from the strokes of the satans,** [97] **and I seek Your refuge from that they come to me."** [98]

(The infidels go on doing their misdeeds) until when

> **death comes to one of them, he will say, "My Lord send me back,** [99] **so that I may act righteously in that which I have left behind." Never! It is just a word he has to utter. And in front of them there is a barrier till the day when they will be resurrected.** [100]

Commentary

قُلْ رَّبِّ اِمَّا تُرِيَنِّى مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ . رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِى فِى الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

> (O prophet) say (in prayer), "O my Lord, if You are to show me (in my life) that (punishment) which they (the infidels) are threatened with, then, my Lord, do not place me among the wrongdoing people." (23: 93, 94)

There are many verses of the Qur'ān which contain warnings of punishment to the unbelievers. While the award of punishment is a certainty on the Day of Judgment, it is possible that it may be awarded in this world also - and even during the life time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And when Allah's wrath descends upon a people, it is not confined to sinners alone, but some times it afflicts virtuous people too, who may not be punished in the Hereafter and may even be compensated by extra rewards for the undeserved punishment which they suffered in this world. The Qur'ān says اِتَّقُوْا فِتْنَةً لَّاتُصِيْبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً (And beware of a punishment which shall not fall on the wrongdoers only - 8:25). In these verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been told by Allah to pray to Him that if His wrath were to descend upon the infidels in his life time, then He ﷺ should be removed from their company. This prayer was suggested to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in spite of the fact that he was impeccable and infallible, the intention being that He ﷺ should at all times remember Allah and beseech His mercy so as to increase his own reward in the Hereafter.

وَاِنَّا عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ

> And of course, We do have the power to show you what We threatened them with. (23:95)

Some commentators say that even though Allah has promised, on account of His regard for the Holy Prophet ﷺ , that He will not punish the entire community while he lives among them وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَاَنْتَ فِيْهِمْ (And Allah is not to send punishment upon them while you are in their midst - 8:33) yet the punishment of some selected persons in special circumstance does not negate the promise. The punishment of the infidels

of Makkah through famine and through their defeat at the hands of the Muslims at the Battle of Badr had taken place in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, which is emphasized in this verse that "We have the power to show you what We threatened them with".

اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِىْ هِىَ اَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ

Repel evil with that which is best - 23:96

Allah instructs the Holy Prophet ﷺ to counter evil with good, oppression with justice and cruelty with mercy. These virtues of conduct have been taught by Allah to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and are generally observed in settling affairs among the Muslims. Later on these instructions were repealed in so far as the infidels and the unbelievers were concerned when Allah permitted Muslims to embark on جہاد (Jihād). Nevertheless even during Jihād the Muslims were told to adopt a humane approach towards the enemy. For example they were forbidden to kill women and children or the priests who did not engage in battle against the Muslims. Similarly, mutilation of the dead bodies of enemies was strictly forbidden. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is instructed in the next verse to seek protection from Satan's evil suggestions even in the battle fields where he may arouse emotions to act against ethics.

وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ هَمَزٰتِ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَ اَعُوْذُبِكَ رَبِّ اَنْ يَّحْضُرُوْنِ ﴿٩٨﴾

And say, 'O my Lord, I seek your refuge from the strokes of the satans, and I seek Your refuge from that they come to me.' (23:97, 98)

The word همز (the infinitive of Hamazāt translated above as 'strokes') means "to push, to press" and sometimes is also used to mean "to make a call from behind". This is a very comprehensive prayer often invoked for protection from the guile and mischief of Satan and the Holy Prophet ﷺ has urged upon the Muslims to recite it frequently in order to avoid sudden bursts of rage which are brought about by the promptings of Satan and which cause people to lose self-control. This prayer is also very effective in repelling other assaults of Satans and Jinns. Sayyidnā Khalid رضي الله عنه suffered from insomnia and the Holy Prophet ﷺ suggested that he should recite the following prayer before going to bed :

أَعُوْذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللّٰهِ التَّامَّةِ مِنْ غَضَبِ اللّٰهِ وَعِقَابِهٖ وَمِنْ شَرِّ عِبَادِهٖ وَمِنْ هَمَزٰتِ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ وَ اَنْ يَّحْضُرُوْنِ

I seek refuge with Allah's Perfect Words from Allah's wrath and His punishment, and from the evils of His slaves, and from the strokes of the satans and from that they come to me.

Sayyidnā Khālid did as advised and was soon cured of insomnia.

اَنْ يَّحْضُرُوْنِ (from that they come to me - 23:98) According to a *ḥadīth* in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that Satan meddles in all human affairs and tempts people to do evil deeds, and that this prayer is the best protection against his attempts. (Qurṭubī)

رَبِّ ارْجِعُوْنِ (My Lord, send me back - 23:99) When death approaches an infidel and he senses the punishment that awaits him on the Day of Judgment, he wishes for a return to this world, so that by performing good deeds he may escape the punishment which he has richly deserved.

Ibn Jarīr has related a story on the authority of Ibn Juraij that the Holy Prophet once said, "At the time of death when a good Muslim perceives the angels of mercy and all the luxuries of Paradise spread out before him, and the angels ask whether he wishes to be sent back to the world, his reply invariably is in the negative. He refuses to return to a place which is full of woes and suffering and misery, and only desires to be taken to Allah's presence. But when the same question is put to an infidel, his answer is رَبِّ ارْجِعُوْنِ i.e. he wishes to be sent back to the world."

كَلَّا ؕ اِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا ؕ وَمِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ

Never! It is just a word he has to utter. And in front of them there is a barrier till the day when they will be resurrected. (23:100)

The word بَرْزَخ (*Barzakh*) means "barrier" and implies anything which intervenes between two conditions or two objects. For this reason it also means the intervening period between death and the Day of Judgment. The meaning of this verse is that the wish of the infidel who has died to be returned to this world is fruitless, because he has reached the *Barzakh* from which no return is possible and a second life cannot be given until the Day of Resurrection, when all the dead will rise and be brought back to life.

Verses 101 -115

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَآ أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَّلَا يَتَسَآءَلُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾
فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ
مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰٓئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوٓا أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾
تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَٰلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَٰتِي تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا
وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَآلِّينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَٰلِمُونَ
﴿١٠٧﴾ قَالَ اخْسَـُٔوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ
عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّٰحِمِينَ
﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّىٰٓ أَنسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنتُم مِّنْهُمْ
تَضْحَكُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوٓا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ
الْفَآئِزُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ قَٰلَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوا
لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسْـَٔلِ الْعَآدِّينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَٰلَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
لَّوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَٰكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ
إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾

Thereafter, when the Ṣūr (the trumpet) is blown, there are no ties of kinship between them, nor will they question one another. [101] **So, the one whose scales (of good deeds) turn out to be heavy, then such people are the successful ones,** [102] **and the one whose scales turn out to be light, then such people are the ones who harmed their own selves; in Jahannam (Hell) they are to remain for ever.** [103] **Fire will scorch their faces and they will be disfigured therein.** [104]

(It will be said to such people), "Were My verses not used to be recited to you and you used to belie them?" [105] **They will say, "Our Lord, our wretchedness**

prevailed over us, and we were a people wandering astray. [106] **O our Lord, get us out from here; if we do this again, then of course, we will be transgressors."** [107] **He (Allah) will say, "Stay in it, humiliated, and do not speak to Me" [108] There was indeed a group of My servants who used to say, "Our Lord, we adhere to the (true) faith, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, and you are the best of all the merciful."** [109] **But you made fun of them, so much so that they caused you to forget My remembrance, and you used to laugh at them.** [110] **I have given them today, for their observing patience, the recompense that they are the only ones who are victorious.'** [111]

He (Allah) will say, "How long did you stay on the earth by number of years?" [112] **They will say, "We stayed for a day or for a part of a day." So, ask the ones who count.** [113] **He will say, "You did not stay but for a little. Would that you have understood (this at that time)!** [114] **So did you think that We created you for nothing and that you will not be brought back to Us?"** [115]

Commentary

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَآ أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ

Thereafter, when the Ṣūr (the trumpet) is blown, there are no ties of kinship between them, - 23:101.

On the Day of Judgment the صور (trumpet) will be sounded twice. The result of the first sound will be that everything - the earth, the skies and every living thing in between will perish and when the second sound is given, every dead thing will come back to life. This is clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān in the verse ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنظُرُونَ (Then it shall be blown again, and lo! They shall stand beholding - 39:68). There is difference of opinion whether in the present verse the reference is to the first call or to the second call. According to Ibn Jubair Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ thought that it refers to the first call. On the other hand Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that reference here is to second call and, according to 'Aṭā' رحمه الله as Sayyidnā 'Abbās ؓ also supports this view and which has also been adopted in Tafsīr Maẓharī. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that on the Day of Judgment every man and woman will be assembled in the gathering place (مَحْشَر) where a herald appointed by

Allah will identify each person by his name and his father's name and invite any one from amongst those present who has a claim against him to come forward and receive it. This proclamation will please everyone - a father having a claim against his son, a wife having a claim against her husband, a sister having a claim against her brother (and vice versa) - and they will all come forward to receive their dues. The present verse describes this situation: فَلَآ أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ (There are no ties of kinship between them - 23:101). The same situation has been described in the verse يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (Upon the day when a man shall flee from his brother, his mother, his father, his consort, his sons, - 80:34).

Difference between the condition of believers and infidels in *maḥshar* (gathering place on the Day of Judgement)

The condition described above will apply to the unbelievers only who in their selfishness will abandon their dear and near relatives. As for the believers, Allah has said أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (We shall join their seed with them. - 52:21) which means that the children of good Muslims, if they themselves are believers also, will be united with their parents. According to a *ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "On the Day of Judgment when everybody will be dry with thirst, Muslim children who had died as minors will come out carrying water from Paradise, and when people will ask them for it, they will reply that water is for their parents only whom they are searching". The gist of this discussion is that whereas in the case of infidels no one will be of any help to each other nor will anyone recognize the dear ones in *maḥshar,* the case of Muslim will be exactly the opposite. The believers will help each other and will also intercede for other Muslims.

There is also a *ḥadīth* which Ibn 'Asākir has related on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "On the Day of Judgment all relationships arising out of a common ancestry or from marriage ties will be severed except in my own case." Scholars have interpreted this verse to mean that all the Muslims of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are part of his family, because he is the father of the Ummah and his wives are the mothers.

وَلَا يَتَسَآءَلُونَ (nor will they question one another - 23:101). However their is another verse وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ (And advance one upon another, asking each other question - 37:27). Discussing this latter verse Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ says that in *maḥshar* there will be different stations, and

the conditions in each station will be different. There will be a time when nobody will speak to anybody, but in another station when the terror which earlier overwhelmed the gathering abates, people will converse with one another. (Maẓharī)

فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

So, the one whose scales (of good deeds) turn out to be heavy, then such people are the successful ones, [102] and the one whose scales turn out to be light, then such people are the ones who harmed their own selves; in Jahannam (Hell) they are to remain for ever. (23: 102, 103)

In this verse there is a comparison between perfect Muslims and the infidels and their deeds and the end which awaits them. There is further evidence in the Qur'ān that in the case of perfect Muslims the pan in which evil deeds are placed for balancing will be totally empty, whereas in the case of unbelievers the pan in which the good deeds are placed will be empty. At another place the Qur'ān says فَلَا نُقِيْمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَزْنًا (We shall not assign to them any weight - 18:105) meaning that on the Day of Judgement, the infidels or their deeds will carry no weight. This is so far as the perfect Muslims and the infidels are concerned. As for the Muslims who have committed sins and whose good deeds and evil deeds will be placed in the two pans of the scale for weighing, there is no specific mention about them in the Qur'ān which is, in general, silent about the punishment and reward of erring Muslims. Perhaps the reason for this is that during the period when the Qur'ān was being revealed, all the Companions were upright men and generally free from major sins, but if somebody committed a sin incidentally, he repented and was forgiven by Allah. (Maẓharī)

There is a verse of the Qur'ān which deals with people who have a mixed bag of good and evil deeds (خَلَطُوْا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَيِّئًا) (They had mixed a good deed with another that was evil - 9:102). Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ says about such people that if their good deeds exceed their bad deeds, even by a single deed they will go to Paradise and if their evil deeds exceed their good by a single deed, they would go to Hell. But a believer Muslim will be sent to Hell for the purpose of purification only just as gold and iron and other metals are subjected to heating process to remove their

impurities and as soon as they are purged of their sins, they will be admitted to Paradise. Also according to Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ on the Day of Judgment the weighing scale will be so precise and finely tuned that it will be tipped by a grain of rye and a man whose good and bad deeds are of equal weight in the scale will join أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ (People of A'raf) and spend a while between heaven and hell waiting for a decision, but ultimately he too would go to Paradise (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Maẓharī). The above story of Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ deals only with believers who have committed sins, and makes no mention of unbelievers.

How will the deeds be weighed?

There are different versions about the method for the weighing of deeds, and all of them are derived from ḥadīth. One version is that the believers and the infidels will be weighed bodily in the scale of justice and the infidel will not be able to tilt the scale however obese and corpulent he may be (Bukhārī and Muslim, quoting Abū Hurairah). Another version says that the scrolls on which their deeds are recorded will be weighed. Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥayyān have taken this version from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ. And according to a third version a man's deeds which were weightless and intangible in this world, will be made solid on the Day of Judgment and will be placed on the scales and weighed. Ṭabrānī has related this version from the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. The words and the text of all these ḥadīths are given in full in Tafsīr Maẓharī which may be consulted if required. Abdur Razzāq has quoted a *ḥadīth* in his book under the chapter on فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ (the merits of knowledge) on the authority of Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī which supports the just preceded version. This version has it that on the Day of Judgment a person's deeds will be brought for weighing and when placed in the pan, they will fail to tilt it. Then something resembling clouds will be brought and put in the pan of good deeds which will then weigh down. The man will then be asked what was it that lent weight to the pan of his good deeds, but he will express his ignorance. Then he will be informed that the object in question was his learning which he used to impart to other people. Dhahabi has included a hadith in فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ which he heard from Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣain ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "On the Day of Judgment the blood of the martyrs will be weighed against the ink of scholars (with which they wrote books on the science of religion)

and the latter will be heavier than the former." (Maẓharī) After giving the above mentioned versions about the weighing of deeds, Tafsīr Maẓharī says that it is not wholly inconceivable that man himself and his deeds may be weighed physically or that he and his record of deeds may be weighed together. Thus there is no inconsistency in these three versions.

وَهُمْ فِيهَا كٰلِحُوْنَ (And they will be disfigured therein - 23:104). The word كالح is used for a person whose lips do not meet and leave his teeth fully exposed, which looks very ugly. It is said that the upper lip of a person consigned to Hell will be drawn up and his lower lip will be drawn down so that his teeth will remain visible at all times.

وَلَا تُكَلِّمُوْنِ (Do not speak to Me - 23:108). According to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī these will be the last words of the people who are cast in hell and in reply Allah will say, "Do not speak to Me." After this they will not be able to speak like human beings, but will make animal sounds to each other. Baihaqī and others have quoted Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b as saying that the Qur'ān mentions five requests made by the people condemned to hell. Out of the five, replies were furnished to four, but in reply to the fifth Allah commanded them not to speak to Him. Thus these are the last words to be uttered by them after which they will not be able to speak. (Maẓharī)

Verses 116 - 118

فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيْمِ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَمَنْ يَّدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۙ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهٗ بِهٖ ۙ فَاِنَّمَا حِسَابُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾

So, High above all is Allah, the King, the True. There is no god but He, the Lord of the Noble Throne. [116] **And whoever invokes another god with Allah, while he has no proof for it, his reckoning lies with his Lord. Surely, the infidels will not achieve success.** [117] **And say (O prophet) 'My Lord, forgive and have mercy and you are the best of all the merciful.'** [118]

Commentary

The last few verses of this Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn from verse 115 to verse 118 have special merit. Baghawī and Tha'labi have related from Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that he came across a person who was very ill. He recited the above verses into the sick man's ears and he was cured immediately. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him what he had whispered in the sick man's ears to which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ replied that he had recited these verses (115 to 118) in his ears. Thereupon the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "I swear by Him Who has power over my life that if a person with genuine faith were to recite these verses on a mountain, the mountain itself may move from its place". (Qurṭubī and Maẓharī)

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ (My Lord, forgive and have mercy - 23:118). Here the object of the forgiveness and having mercy has not been mentioned. What is there to be forgiven and to whom is mercy to be shown? And this seems to suggest a general prayer for forgiveness which would include deliverance from harm and suffering, and a general prayer for mercy which would include the grant of every wish. Since protection from bodily harm and acquisition of legitimate gains is the object of all human activity, this prayer covers both these aspects. (Maẓharī) And the reason why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was commanded to recite this prayer of forgiveness and mercy, even tough he is impeccable, is to impress upon his followers the special merit of this prayer. (Qurṭubī)

Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn began with the verse قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ (Success is really attained by the believers - 23:1) and ends with اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ (Surely, the infidels will not achieve success - 23:117) which shows that success will come to believers only and that the unbelievers will have no share of it.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn
Ends here.

Sūrah An-Nūr

(The Light)

Sūrah An-Nūr was revealed in Madīnah and it has 64 Verses and 9 sections



With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 2

سُوْرَةٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهَا وَفَرَضْنٰهَا وَاَنْزَلْنَا فِيْهَآ اٰيٰتٍ ۢبَيِّنٰتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۱﴾ اَلزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِىْ فَاجْلِدُوْا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ۠ وَّلَا تَاْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَاْفَةٌ فِىْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۚ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۲﴾

This is a Sūrah We have sent down and prescribed and sent down in it clear signs, so that you may receive the advice. [1]

The fornicating woman and the fornicating man, flog each one of them with one hundred stripes. And no pity for them should withhold you from (complying with) Allah's religion, if you really believe in Allah and the Last Day. And a group of believers must witness their punishment. [2]

Some Characteristics of this Sūrah

This Sūrah generally deals with those rules of Sharī'ah which aim at preserving chastity and enjoin *ḥijāb* for women. These rules end up with the punishment prescribed for *zinā* (adultery or fornication). The previous Sūrah (Al-Mu'minūn) had spelt out the basic qualities necessary for attainment of success in this world and in the Hereafter. One of these qualities was to guard one's private parts against illicit sexual acts (verse

4 of that Sūrah). Now the present Sūrah describes the detailed rules meant to acquire this quality. That is why the women are especially directed to learn this Sūrah. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ issued a directive to people of Kūfah in which he advised them to teach Sūrah An-Nūr to women.

Commentary

The first verse of this Sūrah is introductory preface to put extra emphasis to the commands given in it. The very first command after that is regarding punishment for adultery, which has a direct bearing on the intent of the Sūrah - that is to preserve chastity, even of the eyes. The subjects of control on casting eyes and not to enter houses without permission are to follow soon. Commitment of adultery is the ultimate outcome when one ignores all types of prudence against continence and is an open rebellion against Divine precepts. Therefore, the punishment for adultery in Islam is most severe as compared to all other punishments prescribed by the Qur'ān for the crimes committed by human beings. Adultery, being a big crime by itself, also brings along with it many other crimes, the result of which is destruction of the entire social order. If the causes of killings and atrocities are probed deeply, the majority of them will appear to be caused due to illegitimate relationship with women. It is for this reason that in order to eliminate completely this heinous crime, its Islamic punishment has been described in the opening verses.

Adultery is a great crime and is a combination of many crimes. That is why its punishment in Islam is very severe

The Holy Qur'ān and *mutawātir aḥadīth* on their own have fixed the punishments of four crimes. They are not left at the discretion of the judge or the ruler. These punishments are called *Ḥudūd* in the terminology of Islamic jurisprudence. Apart from these, the punishment is not fixed for other crimes, and the ruler or the judge can award the punishment in accordance with the type of crime, the circumstances of the criminal and the background in which the crime is committed, in order to control the spread of crime as he feels best. Such punishments are known as penal laws in Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic *Ḥudūds* are four in number:

(1). Stealing

(2). Leveling false accusation against chaste women.

(3). Drinking liquor

(4). Adultery

Each one of these crimes is very evil in its own right, and while disturbing the peace and tranquility of the society contribute toward other ills of the world at large. However, the ill effects and consequences of adultery are so immense in their destruction of the human values that no other crime can perhaps compete with it.

(1) Molestation of someone's wife, daughter or sister is nothing but his destruction. For a noble man it is not as bad to lose all his material wealth and belongings as to lose the chastity of his women folk. It is for this reason that often we come across such incidents that people whose women folk are molested get after the life of the molester without caring for their own lives. This passion for revenge passes on to the generations and results in the destruction of families after families.

(2) In a community where illicit sexual acts become rampant the family lineage is lost. When the sanctity of relationship with mother, daughter and sister is vanished, with whom the marriage is forbidden, then one can marry them as well, which is even a greater crime than adultery.

(3) If we analyze the causes of disorder and disturbance the world over, we will note that in most cases the root cause is woman and to a lesser degree the wealth. Only those rules can guarantee the worldly peace which safeguard the woman and wealth in a befitting manner and do not allow them to cross the appointed limits. It is not the intention to highlight here the ills and evils of adultery. The points mentioned above are enough for the human society to know the destructive ills of this act. This is why Islam has fixed the punishment of adultery as more severe than the punishments of all other crimes. The punishment has been described in the verse in the following words:

اَلزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِىْ فَاجْلِدُوْا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ

The fornicating woman and the fornicating man, flog each one of them with one hundred stripes - 24:2.

First the fornicating woman is mentioned and then the fornicating man. The punishment for both is the same. The common practice about

injunctions is that mostly the command is conveyed by addressing the men-folk only and the women are included in that by implication. It is not regarded necessary that they be addressed separately. In the whole of Qur'ān masculine gender is used for passing the injunctions through the phrase يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا and women-folk are regarded as included in that. Perhaps the wisdom is that as Allah Ta'ālā has ordained the women-folk to keep themselves covered, in the same way their mention is kept covert in the context of mankind. But here there was a possibility that some might have the confusion that all these injunctions relate to men only and the women are free from them. Therefore, in some specific verses the women-folk are also mentioned alongside separately like in the verse اَقِمْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتِيْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ (33:33). Moreover, where both men and women are to be mentioned then the natural order is that first the men are mentioned and then women. In the case of punishment for stealing, the same order is maintained in the injunction اَلسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوْۤا اَيْدِيَهُمَا (As for a man or woman who commits theft, cut off the hands of both - 5:38) where the male thief is mentioned first and then the female thief. But in the case of punishment for adultery only an incidental mention of women was not considered enough, instead a specific reference was regarded necessary. Secondly, mention of the women is given priority over men. There are many points of wisdom in this. First, the women are regarded weaker sex and compassionable for their physique; if they were not mentioned specifically, one could have had the misgiving that perhaps the women are exempt from this punishment. The mention of woman is preceded because the act of adultery is so impudent that its commitment from her side could be carried out only by extreme fearlessness and carelessness, because the nature has bestowed in her character instinctive shyness and an urge to guard her chastity. The nature has provided many a things for the safety of women. Hence commitment of fornication from her side is more grave than from man. As against this, in the case of theft it is a bigger crime for men who are bestowed with strength by Allah Ta'ālā, so that they earn their living from the bounty He has provided. The man is required to take advantage of Allah's bounty by working for the sustenance and not stealing for the living, as this is a great shame and sin for him. Since the women do not have the same circumstances, if they commit theft their crime will be of a lesser degree as compared to that of men.

فَاجْلِدُوْا (24:2) Meaning of the word جَلْد is to hit with the whip, and it is derived from the word جِلْد (leather). As the whip is normally made of leather, some commentators have suggested that by the use of word جَلْد it is alluded that the strike of the whip should be so moderate that it should be felt only within the skin and not deeper into the flesh. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had himself urged that the punishment of whipping be exercised with moderation, so that neither it is so hard that it tears off the flesh nor so mild that it does not hurt at all. On this point some commentators have reproduced *aḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with their chain of narrators.

The punishment of whipping a hundred times is exclusive to unmarried man and woman. For married persons the punishment is stoning to death

This point is worth noting that the injunctions on adultery were revealed gradually and moved on from a lighter punishment to a more severe one, like the gradual prohibition of alcohol which is mentioned in the Qur'ān itself, the details of which have been described earlier. The very first injunction on adultery is the one given in verses 15 and 16 of Sūrah An-Nisā', which is:

وَالّٰتِیْ یَاْتِیْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِّسَآئِکُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوْا عَلَیْهِنَّ اَرْبَعَةً مِّنْکُمْ ۚ فَاِنْ شَهِدُوْا فَاَمْسِکُوْ هُنَّ فِی الْبُیُوْتِ حَتّٰی یَتَوَفّٰهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ اَوْیَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِیْلًا. وَالَّذٰنِ یَاْتِیٰنِهَا مِنْکُمْ فَاٰذُوْهُمَا ۚ فَاِنْ تَابَا وَاَصْلَحَا فَاَعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ کَانَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِیْمًا.

And those of your women who commit the shameful act, then have four witnesses against them from among you. So, if they do testify, then confine those women to their homes until death overcomes them or Allah prescribes a way for them. [15] And those two of you who commit it, torture them both. But if they repent and amend, turn away from them. Surely, Allah is Most-Relenting, Very-Merciful. (4:15, 16)

Detailed commentary and explanation of the above two verses is given under Sūrah An-Nisā'. They are repeated here so that preliminary stage of the punishment of fornication is kept in mind. In these verses the proof for establishing adultery is described with a specific condition of having four male witnesses. Secondly, punishment for the woman is prescribed as to confine her within the home and for both of them inflicting of harm. At the same time it is also hinted that this was not the final injunction on

adultery and that some more directives will follow. This is the meaning of أَوْيَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيْلًا (or Allah prescribes a way for them - 4:15).

In the above referred punishment confinement of the women within the homes was regarded sufficient at that time, and causing harm to both as enough punishment. But the limit, the magnitude and the form of harm to be inflicted was not defined. Rather the wordings of the Qur'ān suggest that the initial punishment of adultery was only punitive, of which the quantum was not fixed by the Sharī'ah a *ta'zir* (a punishment left to the discretion of a judge), but was left at the discretion of the ruler or the judge. That is why the ambiguous phrase of inflicting harm or torture was adopted. But at the same time it was hinted that probably some other form of punishment for the culprits of the crime will be introduced later by saying أَوْيَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيْلًا (4:15). When the present verse of Sūrah an-Nūr was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said that what was promised in Sūrah An-Nisā' through أَوْيَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيْلًا "or Allah prescribes a way for them", so now this verse of Sūrah an-Nūr has prescribed the way, that is flogging both man and woman with a hundred stripes. And then Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ made the punishment of hundred stripes exclusive to fornication, that is when the crime is committed by unmarried man and woman, and said:

الرّجم للثّيب والجلد للبكر

> It is prescribed that if the married man and woman commit this crime then they be stoned to death, and the punishment for unmarried culprit is a hundred stripes. (Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitāb ut-Tafsīr p. 657)

In the verse of Sūrah an-Nūr under reference punishment for adultery is given as a hundred stripes without qualification. So, it is obvious that he must have found from some other authentic Ḥadīth that the punishment for adultery is stoning to death and for fornication a hundred stripes, and that Ḥadīth has been related by Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Musnād Aḥmad, Sunnan Nasa'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

خذوا عنّی خذوا عنّی قد جعل اللّٰه لهنّ سبيلا، البكر بالبكر جلد مائة وتغريب عام،
والثيّب بالثيّب جلد مائة والرّجم (ابن كثير)

> Have knowledge from me, have knowledge from me that Allah Ta'ālā has prescribed now the 'way for women' (that He had promised before), which is that for unmarried man and woman is a hundred stripes and exile for one year, and for married man and woman it is a hundred stripes and stoning.

Alongwith the punishment of a hundred stripes for the unmarried man and woman prescribed in the an-Nūr verse there is an additional punishment mentioned in the Ḥadīth to send the adulterer man in exile for one year. On this there is a difference of opinion among jurists, that is whether the punishment of exile to male adulterer is compulsory or it is at the discretion of the judge - that is if he deems it necessary only then send the criminal in exile also for one year. In the opinion of Imām A'ẓam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى this last referred position is correct, that is, it remains at the discretion of the ruler or judge. Secondly, according to this Ḥadīth there is the punishment of a hundred stripes also for the married man and woman before the stoning. But in accordance with other *aḥādīth* and the actions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the first four Caliphs, it is established that these two punishments are not to be combined.

Married persons are to be awarded the punishment of stoning only. The main point to be noted in this Ḥadīth is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has explained here the verse of Surah An-Nisa' أَوْيَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا (or Allah prescribes a way for them) and while explaining he had added some more points beside flogging a hundred stripes as stated in Sūrah an-Nūr. These points are:

1. - punishment of hundred stripes is exclusive to unmarried man and woman.

2. - An addition of one year's exile.

3. - Rajm or stoning to death of married man and woman.

It is but obvious that the additions made by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the verse of Surah an-Nūr was also on the command of Allah Ta'ālā إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحٰى (This is naught but a revelation revealed - 53:4). For the Messenger, and for those who hear from him directly, both the revelations which are recited in the form of Qur'ān and those which are not recited have equal sanctity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself had acted upon this rule (punishment of stoning to married adulterer) in the presence of many

of his companions. He awarded the punishment of *rajm* or stoning to Mā'iz and Ghāmidiyyah which is recorded in all the books of traditions with authentic authorities. Additionally, an incident is reported in the authentic traditions books on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Zaid Ibn Khālid Juhanī رضى الله عنهما that an unmarried man committed adultery with a married woman whose servant he was. The father of the adulterer boy brought him before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The incident was proved by his admission. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: لا قضينّ بينكما بكتاب الله that is I will adjudge your case according to the Book of Allah. He then adjudicated that the unmarried adulterer boy be flogged with a hundred stripes and the married woman is stoned, and directed Sayyidnā Unais ؓ to execute the punishment, who took the confessional statement of the woman, and then the punishment was carried out on the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. (Ibn Kathīr)

According to above tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ awarded the punishment of hundred stripes to one criminal and of stoning to the other and described them both as the judgment by the Book of Allah; although in Sūrah An-Nūr only the punishment of hundred stripes is indicated and there is no mention of stoning. The reason is the same that Allah Ta'ālā had revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the complete explanation and details of the injunction which all fall within the purview of the Book of Allah, although some of it is not included and mentioned in the Sūrah an-Nūr expressly. Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded an address of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, the wordings of which are:

قال عمر بن الخطاب رضى الله عنه، وهو جالس على منبر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: انّ الله بعث محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم بالحق وانزل عليه الكتاب، فكان مما انزل الله عليه اية الرجم قرأناها وَ وعيناها وعقلناها، فرجم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ورجمنا بعده، فاخشى ان طال بالناس زمان ان يقول قائل ما نجد الرجم فى كتاب الله تعالىٰ فيضلوا بترک فريضة انزلها الله، وان الرجم فى كتاب الله حق على من زنا اذا احصن من الرّجال والنساء اذا قامت البينة او كان الحبل اوالاعتراف. (مسلم ص ٦٥، ج ٢)

Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ said while he was sitting on the pulpit of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Allah sent Muḥammad ﷺ with truth and revealed to him the Book. So, whatever is revealed to him includes the verse of stoning (رجم) as well,

which we have read, memorized and understood. Now I fear that with the passage of time one might say that we do not find the injunction of *rajm* (stoning) in the Book of Allah, and hence go astray by not following a religious obligation, which is revealed by Allah. And be clear in your mind that the injunction of stoning (*rajm*) is ordained upon the one, whether man or woman, who is married (محصن) and when the evidence of adultery is established or there is a confession or pregnancy .

The same version is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī also with greater detail (Bukhārī 1009 vol.2) and in Nasai' it is narrated in the following words:

انا لانجد من الرجم بدًا، فانّه حد من حدود اللّٰه، الا وان رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم قد رجم ورجمنا بعده، ولولا ان يقول قائلون ان عمر زاد فى كتاب اللّٰه ماليس فيه لكتبت فى ناحية المصحف، وشهد عمر بن الخطاب وعبد الرحمٰن بن عوف و فلان و فلان ان رسول اللّٰه ﷺ رجم ورجمنا بعده۔ الحديث (ابن كثير)

We have no choice to avoid the punishment of stoning (*rajm*), because it is one of the punishment (حد) from the punishments prescribed by Allah. Be very clear in your mind that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself had awarded stoning and we too have awarded stoning after him. If there was no risk of people saying that 'Umar has added something on his own in the Book of Allah, I would have written this in a corner of the Qur'ān. And 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ is witness, 'Abdurraḥmān ؓ is witness and so and so companions are witnesses that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had awarded stoning. (Ibn Kathīr)

This is apparently proved by the address of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ that there is a specific verse on injunction of stoning which is in addition to the verse under reference of Sūrah an-Nūr. But Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ did not tell the wordings of that verse, nor did he tell that if there is a separate verse beside the verse of Sūrah an-Nūr why it is not included in the Qur'ān, and why it is not recited. He only said that if there was no risk involved that people would put blame on him of making addition in the Book of Allah, he would have written this verse on a corner of the Qur'ān. (al-Nasai')

What needs careful consideration in this narration is that, if it is a verse of the Qur'ān and its recitation is mandatory like other verses, then why Sayyidna 'Umar ؓ left it out just because of the fear of people's calumny; when he is well known for his vehemence about Allah's

injunctions. The other point to be noted is that he did not say that he would have included this verse in the Qur'ān, but all he said was he would have written it on the margin of the Qur'ān.

All these things support the inference that the explanation of this verse that Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in which he specified the punishment of hundred stripes for unmarried man and woman and stoning for the married persons. He treated it as a verse of the Book of Allah because of the words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his consistent practice. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ understood fully well that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ explanation was in line with the command of Allah's Book and not actually the verse of the Book, otherwise no power on earth would have stopped him to write down the verse in its place if it was missed out. His comment about writing it on the margin of Qur'ān is further proof that the verse was not a part of Qur'ān but only the explanation of the verse of Sūrah an-Nūr. Some narrations have carried the actual wordings of the injunction on the subject, but they fall short of proof and authenticity to merit inclusion in the Qur'ān. The jurists (فقہاء) who have related this verse as abrogated for recitation but not abrogated as a command have done so by way of an example, and as such it does not in fact prove that it is a part of the Qur'ān.

The gist of the matter is that the punishment of hundred stripes described in Sūrah an-Nūr for adulterer man and woman is exclusive to unmarried man and woman as per detailed explanation and elucidation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and punishment for the married persons is *rajm* (stoning). Although this elucidation is not given in the wordings of the verse but the exalted person to whom this verse was revealed has himself elaborated the subject without the slightest doubt of any confusion. It is not that the Holy Prophet ﷺ explained this only through his words, but he also executed this punishment several times in the presence of many companions, and the proof of this has reached us with unbroken authentic chain of narrators. Therefore, the punishment of stoning for married man and woman is in fact an injunction of the Book of Allah itself, in the sense that it is as certain as any other injunction of the Qur'an. This fact may be mentioned either by saying that *rajm* is a provision of the Qur'ān itself, or by saying that it is established by the unbroken chain of traditions. Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ has also said the same

thing that the verdict of stoning is established by the tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

An important warning

Wherever words married and unmarried appear in the above explanation, they are used for ease of explanation. The actual words used in the saying are غیرمُحْصَن or ثَیِّب and بِکر . The real position of مُحْصَن in Islamic jurisprudence is of the one who has copulated with the spouse with an authentic Nikah, and is also sane. Whenever we have used the words 'married' in this context, it carries the same meaning. It is only for brevity and ease that the word 'married' has been used.

Three degrees of gradations in the punishment of adultery

On pondering over the verses of the Qur'ān and the *aḥadīth* referred to above, it becomes clear that initially the punishment of fornication was light in that the judge or the ruler was to afflict pain to the perpetrator (man and woman) of the crime at his own discretion, and confine the woman in the home. This punishment was enjoined in Sūrah An-Nisā'. The second period was that when the verse of Sūrah an-Nūr was revealed in which hundred stripes each to both were enjoined. The third period was the one when the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed after the revelation of the verse under discussion that the punishment of hundred stripes will be restricted only to those who are not married, but if married man and woman commit this crime then their punishment is stoning (*rajm*).

In Islamic law if the punishment of a crime is severe, the conditions of proving it are also tough

As described above, the punishment of adultery in Islam is most severe compared to punishments of all other crimes. Alongwith that the conditions to prove this crime are equally tough in Islamic law. If there is the slightest doubt or uncertainty, then the maximum punishment, known as *ḥadd* (حد), is remitted, and only a punishment by way of *ta'zīr* may be awarded which should be commensurate with the extent of crime. In all other cases testimony of two men or one man and two women is required for the proof of a particular event. However, for the maximum punishment of fornication (حدزنا) the evidence, of four male eye-witnesses is necessary who must testify without a slightest doubt or confusion. Another severe circumstance that aggravates the severity of an evidence of fornication is that if the evidence of a witness in a case of adultery is

rejected, then the witness himself may suffer badly, because in that case, he may be charged for false accusation of adultery (قذف) and may be awarded the punishment of eighty stripes. Therefore, no one will dare testify the fornication where there's even slightest degree of doubt. However, if the adultery is not proved clearly by eye witnesses, but there is proven evidence of a man and woman found in a compromising and unlawful position, then the judge can award the punishment by way of *ta'zīr* which stripes as are suitable in that particular case. Details of the punishment for fornication and its conditionalities can be seen in the books of Fiqh.

Injunction against homosexuality and sex with animals

The issue that if a man indulges in sexual act with a man or an animal, whether his act falls within the purview of fornication or not, and whether its punishment is the same as that of fornication has already been dealt with under the commentary of Sūrah An-Nisā'. Although this act is not called fornication neither lexically nor in the terminology of Sharī'ah and hence punishment of fornication is not applied to that, but its punishment is no less in its severity compared to punishment of fornication. The noble Companions ﷺ punished such culprits by burning them alive.

لَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ

No pity for them should withhold you from (complying with) Allah's religion - 24:2.

Since the punishment for adultery is very severe and there is the possibility that those awarding the punishment may feel pity and be lenient, hence, it is also enjoined that in the fulfillment of this important religious duty any compassion is not permissible. Pity or mercy and forgiveness or pardon are always laudable, but any compassion shown to criminals will result in injustice to the entire humanity; hence it is prohibited and not permissible.

وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And a group of believers must witness their punishment. - 24:2

At the time of execution of the punishment of fornication a group of Muslims should be present to watch. It is customary in Islam to execute

all punishments, specially the *ḥudūd,* in public, so that those who see it take a warning. But the directive for the presence of a group of Muslims at the time of execution of punishment for fornication is peculiar to this punishment.

Initially Islam requires not to publicize the crimes, but once they are established through evidence, it is the requirement of wisdom to disgrace the criminals

For the control of vulgarity and shamelessness Islamic laws have imposed far reaching restrictions. It is made obligatory for women to cover themselves. Men are asked to lower their eyes on seeing women-folk. The sound of jewelry or the singing of women are prohibited as they may lead to wanton acts. However, if someone is seen wanting in adopting Islamic teachings, he should be guided in private, but is not allowed to be disgraced. But if someone has crossed all limits and has broken all the ties with Islamic laws, and his crime is established in accordance with the Islamic jurisprudence, then keeping his crime secret might embolden others for committing this crime. Hence, the extent to which Islam has cared for avoiding publicity of the crime, to the same extent the emphasis is laid in making it public for disgracing the culprits, once the crime is established. It is for this reason that not only the punishment for adultery is enjoined to be executed publicly, but the presence of a group of Muslims at the time of execution is also made mandatory.

Verse 3

اَلزَّانِىْ لَايَنْكِحُ اِلَّا زَانِيَةً اَوْمُشْرِكَةً ۫ وَّالزَّانِيَةُ لَايَنْكِحُهَآ اِلَّا زَانٍ
اَوْمُشْرِكٌ ۚ وَحُرِّمَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۳﴾

A man who is fornicator does not (like to) marry but a woman who is a fornicator or a polytheist. And a woman who is a fornicator does not (like to) marry but a man who is a fornicator or a polytheist. And this (i.e. preferring to marry such spouses) has been prohibited for the believers. [3]

Commentary

The second injunction about fornication

The first injunction was regarding the punishment of fornication,

which has been described in the previous verse. The second injunction is about marrying the men or women who have committed adultery. Alongside the marriage with polytheist man and woman is also described. The commentators have given different views while explaining this verse, but the simplest and safe meaning is that fornication is an obnoxious act, and as such whoever indulges in this act loses his character and taste, and is attracted towards persons of the same character, and likes to marry them.

The objective of this verse, according to this interpretation, is not part of an injunction, but merely to describe a fact of life, normally seen in every day life. This is a reflection on the filthy act of fornication, and its far reaching detrimental and evil effects. In other words, the verse says that fornication is a poison to ethics, and its poisonous effects ruin the moral behavior of man. He stops differentiating between good and bad, and develops a liking for evil things. He does not bother about permissible (حلال) and prohibited (حرام). Any woman that he fancies for is with the purpose of fornication, and hence he tries to cajole her into the shameful act. If he fails in his advances, only then agrees for the marriage under compulsion. But he does not really like the marriage, because he finds the objects of marriage, such as being faithful to wife, produce virtuous children and take charge of all her needs and alimony for life, a burden and nuisance for him. Since such a person does not have any concern with the marriage, his inclination is not restricted towards Muslim women but is as much for polytheist women. If a polytheist woman lays the condition of marital bond for fulfilling her religious obligation, then he would agree for the marriage as well to meet his desire, without having regard that such a marriage has no sanctity and is not valid in Islamic law. It, therefore, comes true on him that if he has a fancy for a Muslim woman, she would either be an adulterer or will become an adulterer after having illicit relations with him, or he would fancy a polytheist woman, with whom the marriage is as impermissible as adultery. This is the explanation of the first sentence of the verse, that is اَلزَّانِیْ لَایَنْکِحُ اِلَّا زَانِیَۃً اَوْمُشْرِکَۃً (24:3).

Likewise, if a woman is a habitual adulterer and does not beg Allah's pardon, then a truly believing Muslim male, for whom marriage is a religious trust, would not really fancy such a woman, especially knowing

fully well that she would not give up her obnoxious habit of adultery even after the bond of marriage. Only a male adulterer would be attracted to her whose sole aim is to fulfill his lust rather than marriage. But if she makes marriage a condition for any mundane consideration, he accepts that too as a compromise. Alternatively, a polytheist male would agree to marry an adulterer (Muslim) woman. Since, marrying a polytheist is as prohibited for a Muslim woman as adultery, two things have been combined in this situation, that the man is both a polytheist and an adulterer. This is the explanation of the second sentence of the verse "وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا اِلَّا زَانٍ اَوْ مُشْرِكٌ" (24:3).

This has become apparent from the above explanation that the term adulterer is used for those men and women who do not repent and beg Allah's Mercy, and stick to this evil habit. In case an adulterer man marries a chaste woman for the sake of house-keeping or for having children, then there is no ban to this marriage from this verse. Similarly, if an adulterer woman marries a virtuous man with the intent of leading a pure life, then also there is no stopping for such a marriage in the light of this verse. Such a marriage will be valid in accordance with the Islamic law. Majority of the Muslim jurists like Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī etc. are of the same view, and it is also established that the companions of the Prophet ﷺ have solemnized such marriages. Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr has also reported the same *fatwa* by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ. Now, as to the last sentence of the verse وَحُرِّمَ ذٰلِکَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (24:3) some commentators have explained the word ذٰلِکَ as alluding towards adultery. In that case the meaning of the sentence would be that, as the adultery is such an evil act, it has been forbidden for believers. There is no confusion in the meaning by adopting this explanation, but taking ذٰلِکَ for the meaning of adultery is rather far fetched in the context of this verse. Therefore, other commentators have adopted the explanation for ذٰلِکَ to allude towards the marriage of adulterer (man and woman) and polytheist (man and woman).

The marriage between a Muslim man and a polytheist woman, and between a polytheist man and a Muslim woman is even otherwise established as forbidden by other categorical Qur'ānic injunctions, and there is consensus of Ummah on the issue. However, the marriage between an adulterer man and a chaste woman, and a chaste man and

an adulterer woman is forbidden as implied by this sentence but is exclusive to the situation that a chaste man after marrying an adulterer woman does not stop her from indulging in adultery even after the marriage, as that will be nothing short of pimping, which is forbidden (حرام) by Islamic law. Similarly, if a pious and chaste lady marries a habitual adulterer man and let him indulge in adultery even after the marriage, then this is also forbidden (حرام). What is meant here is that it is a big sin, but it does not follow that their marriage will be nullified.

The word 'prohibited' (حرام) has two connotations in Islamic law. One, that this act is a sin and one who acts upon it will undergo punishment for that in the Hereafter, and the other is that it will have no legal validity in this world either. For instance if a Muslim man marries a polytheist or a woman of prohibited degree, then it is not only a sin but such a marriage is not valid under Islamic law. There is no difference between such a marriage and adultery. The second meaning of prohibition is that the act is forbidden (حرام) and is liable for punishment, but the legal consequences of the act are recognized. For example if a man elopes or abducts a woman and then marries her before two witnesses with her consent, then despite the act being unlawful, the marriage will be valid and the children legitimate. Similarly the marriage between an adulterer man and an adulterer woman is though prohibited if they marry for some worldly expediency but their real aim is adultery, yet, such a marriage is legally recognized. As such all the provisions of marriage, such as alimony, dower, lineage proof, heritage etc. will all be applicable. This way the word حرّم in this verse fits in very well for the polytheist woman as per former explanation, and for the adulterers (man and woman) according to the latter explanation.

In the light of this explanation it is not needed to declare the verse as cancelled as has been done by some commentators.

Verses 4 - 5

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوْا بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوْهُمْ
ثَمٰنِيْنَ جَلْدَةً وَّلَا تَقْبَلُوْا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً اَبَدًا ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ

﴿٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا ۚ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

And those who accuse the chaste women (of fornication), but they do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes and do not accept their any evidence any more, and they are the sinners, [4] **except those who repent afterwards and mend their ways; then, Allah is All-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [5]

Commentary

The third injunction relating to fornication is on false accusation and the punishment prescribed for it

As explained earlier, since adultery is the most damaging and heinous of all crimes for society, as such its punishment is also most severe under Islamic law, compared to all other crimes. Hence it was the requirement of justice and fairness that the special care be attached to prove this act. Without having prescribed evidence under Islamic law, no one should dare accuse any man or woman of adultery. Therefore, the Islamic law has made it mandatory to produce four honest equitable just men as witnesses to the crime, without which the accusation of adultery is declared a big crime by itself, for which the prescribed punishment (حد) is eighty stripes. In view of this mandatory provision one would dare making the accusation of adultery only when he is absolutely sure of watching the crime happening himself. Not only that, at the same time he should be sure that alongwith him another three honest men have also seen the crime happening, for which they will give the evidence. Because, if there are no other witnesses, or the total number is less than four, or there is doubt if the witnesses will give the evidence, then only one man would never like to venture evidence alone and be punished with eighty stripes.

A doubt and its answer

As for the issue that when there are such strong conditions for the evidence of adultery, the criminals will have a free hand. No one will ever dare to give evidence and fulfill the conditions of Islamic law, and hence, no criminal will ever get punished. But this thinking is totally wrong, because these conditions are exclusive to the punishment prescribed as

ḥadd for adultery, i.e. - hundred stripes or stoning. If two non-*mehram* man and woman are seen together in a compromising posture or indulging in shameless acts, then there is no restriction against giving evidence for it. All such matters which have nexus to adultery are also liable for punishment under Islamic penal code, for which punishment of stripes is awarded at the discretion of the judge or the ruler in accordance with the extent of the crime, but not the maximum punishment of *ḥadd*. Therefore, someone who has seen the act of adultery, but has no other witnesses need not give evidence of adultery, but can testify for having seen the accused persons in compromising position, and the judge or ruler can award the punishment after establishing the crime.

Who are *muḥṣanāt* (مُحْصَنَات)

The word *Muḥṣanāt* is derived from the word إحْصَان. In the Islamic jurisprudence there are two types of إحْصَان . One, that has been acknowledged for the punishment of adultery. It means that the person against whom adultery is established is sane, adult, a free Muslim, and who is validly married to a Muslim woman and has also copulated with her. In that case the punishment of stoning will be awarded to him. The second type is that which has been acknowledged for the punishment of قذف, that is punishment for accusation of adultery. It means that the person against whom the charge of adultery is levelled is sane, adult, a free Muslim and chaste, that is he has not been proved an adulterer before. The word مُحْصَنَات is used in this sense in this verse (Jaṣṣāṣ).

Ruling

In the Qur'ānic verse, either because of general practice or because of the incident for which the verse was revealed, the accusation of adultery and related punishment is described in a way that the accusers are men and the accused is a chaste lady. But the injunction applies to all situations because of the common ground applicable to all persons. If a woman levels a charge of adultery against another woman or a man, or a man accuses another man, but the required legal evidence is lacking, then in either case the accuser will be liable to the punishment of eighty stripes. (Jaṣṣāṣ & Hidāyah)

Ruling

The punishment of eighty stripes as *ḥadd* is exclusive to false

accusation of adultery and does not apply to accusation of any other crime. However, other punishments of *ta'zīr* can be awarded on false accusations of other crimes. Although it is not specifically mentioned in the Qur'ān that this punishment is exclusive to false accusation of adultery but the condition of four witnesses is the proof of its exclusiveness, because the condition of four witnesses is only in the case of adultery. (Jaṣṣāṣ and Hidāyah)

Ruling

The punishment prescribed for *qazf* (false accusation of adultery) relates to the right of the person against whom the charge of adultery is levelled. As such the punishment against this crime will be executed only when the person demands the execution of the punishment, otherwise it will be annulled. This is unlike the punishment of adultery, which is purely a right of Allah. Therefore, it has to be executed, even though no person has ever demanded for it.

وَلَا تَقْبَلُوْا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً اَبَدًا

And do not accept his any evidence any more - 24:4.

It means that the person guilty of *qazf* is subject to two punishments. One is inflict at once, i.e. the eighty stripes, but there is another punishment which stays with the culprit for ever. This punishment is that his evidence will not be accepted in any matter, unless he begs Allah's pardon with sincere repentance, and is also forgiven by the one whom he had accused. Until this is done, his evidence will not be acceptable in any case. This much is by consensus of Ummah. But in case of Hanafiah, even after begging the pardon, his evidence is not acceptable. Only his sin is pardoned.

اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصْلَحُوْا ۚ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

Except those who repent afterwards and mend their ways; then, Allah is All-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. (24:5)

Those who have been punished for false accusation of adultery, if they beg pardon and improve their habits, so that there is no risk of repetition of falsehood from them and also obtain forgiveness from one they had accused, then Allah Ta'ālā grants forgiveness and is Merciful.

This exemption, that is اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا refers to only the last sentence of the

previous verse according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and some other Imāms, which is وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ (24:4). So, with this exemption it means that the one who is punished for false accusation is a sinner, but if he repents with sincerity and improves himself after obtaining forgiveness from the one he had falsely accused, then he will no longer remain a sinner, and his punishment will be pardoned in the Hereafter. In other words the two punishments meant for this world, which are referred in the beginning of the verse, that is eighty stripes and inadmissibility of his evidence, will remain despite the repentance. It is because the big punishment of stripes has already been executed and the second punishment is part of *ḥadd.* All scholars are unanimous on the point that repentance does not remit punishment of *ḥadd,* only the torment of the Hereafter is pardoned. Since inadmissibility of the evidence is part of *ḥadd,* it will not be remitted by repentance. Imām Shafi'i and some other Imāms have taken this exemption toward all the sentences of the previous verse, which means that as one does not remain sinner after repentance, hence he would also not be debarred from giving evidence. Jaṣṣāṣ and Maẓharī have provided arguments on both sides - Those interested may consult them.

Verses 6 - 10

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ اَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ شُهَدَآءُ اِلَّآ اَنْفُسُهُمْ
فَشَهَادَةُ اَحَدِهِمْ اَرْبَعُ شَهٰدٰتٍ بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾
وَالْخَامِسَةُ اَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ اِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ وَيَدْرَؤُا
عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ اَنْ تَشْهَدَ اَرْبَعَ شَهٰدٰتٍ بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ
﴿٨﴾ وَالْخَامِسَةَ اَنَّ غَضَبَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهَآ اِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

And those who accuse their wives (of adultery) and they have no witnesses except their own selves, then the evidence of one of them would be to swear four oaths by Allah that he is from among the truthful, [6] **and the fifth (oath) that Allah's curse be on him if he is from among the liars.** [7] **And it will remove the punishment from the woman if she swears four oaths by Allah that**

he (the accuser husband) is certainly from among the liars, [8] **and the fifth (oath) that Allah's wrath be on her if he is among the truthful.** [9] **And had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy and (had it not been) that Allah is Most-Relenting, All-Wise (you would have been ruined).** [10]

Commentary

The fourth injunction is of Li'an (لِعَان : curse) among the adjuncts of fornication

The meaning of لِعَان and مُلَاعَنَة is to curse and praying for Allah's wrath on each other. Certain specific types of oaths between husband and wife with special connotation are called *Li'ān* (لِعَان) in Islamic law. When a husband accuses his wife of adultery or refuses to own his child as being legitimate, and his wife refutes his allegation to be false, and claims for the punishment of false accusation (قذف) of eighty stripes to be awarded to him, then the husband will be asked to produce four witnesses. If the husband produces four witnesses, then the wife will be awarded the punishment of adultery, and if he could not produce four witnesses, then they will be subjected to *li'ān* (لِعَان), that is first the husband will be asked to testify four times with the wordings given in the Qur'ān to the effect that he is honest, and the fifth time will say that if he was lying, then Allah's curse be on him.

If the husband hesitates from saying these words, then he should be arrested, and asked either to swear by saying these words five times or accept himself to be a liar. Until he accedes to one of the two alternatives, he should not be released. If he accepts himself to be a liar, then he should be awarded the punishment of false allegation of adultery (حد القذف), but, in case he swears by repeating the required words five times, then the wife be asked to swear five times by uttering the words given in the Qur'an for this purpose. If she refuses to swear, then she should be put under arrest until such time that either she swears five times or accepts her guilt of adultery, in which case she will be awarded the punishment for adultery. In case she agrees to swear and utters the required words five times, then the process of *li'ān* (لِعَان) has been completed. This way they both have escaped the punishment in this world, but in the Hereafter, the one who has lied will suffer the punishment, as Allah knows best who is the liar. However, in this world

also, after the process of *li'ān* (لعان) this couple will be forbidden to each other for ever. The husband should free the woman by divorcing her. If the husband does not divorce her, then the judge or the ruler can have them separated by his decree, which will have the same force as divorce. Moreover, they also cannot get married again for ever. Details of the process of *li'ān* (لعان) are given in the books of *fiqh*, where they can be seen.

The law of *li'ān* (لعان) has been placed in the Islamic jurisprudence to take care of the psychology and emotions of the husband, because in the preceding verses it has been ruled that for putting the blame of adultery on anyone it is essential to produce four eyewitnesses, and if one fails to do so, then he himself will be liable to punishment of false allegation of adultery. For a common man it is possible to keep quiet and not to accuse someone of adultery if he cannot produce four eye-witnesses, in order to save himself from the punishment of false accusation of adultery, but for the husband it is different and a very grave matter, when he has seen the adultery of his wife with his own eyes. For if he accuses his wife without the support of four eye-witnesses he will be liable to punishment of eighty stripes, and if he keeps quiet, it will be a life long agony for him to live with the knowledge that his wife has been unfaithful to him. Therefore, the husband's case has been separated from the general law and a separate provision has been prescribed, which is exclusive to the case between husband and wife. For others the directive is the same as enjoined in the preceding verses.

The books of Ḥadīth have narrated two incidents under this subject The commentators have different views as to which of the two incidents was the cause of revelation of these verses. Qurṭubī has taken both the incidents as the cause of revelation of verses so as the revelation was repeated twice. Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajr, the annotator of Bukhārī, and Nawawī, the annotator of Muslim, have treated both incidents as the cause of revelation of the verses. Their reasoning is more appealing, which will soon appear. One incident is that of Hilāl bin Umayyah and his wife, which is narrated in Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ . The initial part of this incident, also on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ , has appeared in the Musnād of Aḥmad like this:

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that when the verses of Qur'ān on

punishment of false accusation of adultery were revealed namely,

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوْا بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوْهُمْ ثَمٰنِيْنَ جَلْدَةً

> And those who accuse the chaste women (of fornication), but they do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes - 24:4.

in which it is made obligatory on the person accusing a woman of adultery to produce four eyewitnesses, one of them he being himself, and if he fails to do so, then he should be charged with the false accusation and awarded eighty stripes instead, and should also be debarred for life from giving any evidence. After hearing these verses a leader of Madīnah, Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah ﷺ enquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether these verses were revealed like that only. The Holy Prophet ﷺ (was very surprised to hear this from Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah), asked the Anṣār whether they were listening to what their leader had said. The group of Anṣār pleaded to the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to reproach him, as he had made this enquiry only because of extreme sense of honour. Then Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah spoke himself and said "My parents be sacrificed on your honour! I know fully well that these verses are nothing but truth, and have been revealed from Allah Ta'ālā; but what I am surprised of is that if I see a shameless wife in a situation that a strange man is lying over her, then would it not be right for me to scold him and remove him from there. Instead, will it be incumbent on me to get four men and show them this situation to make them eye-witnesses, and by the time I could find four men, he runs away after performing his work?". (Sayyidnā Sa'd's wordings are recorded with slight differences by various narrators, but the gist of all is the same. - Qurṭubī)

Only a short time had lapsed after revelation of the verses of punishment against false accusation of adultery and the remarks made by Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah, that the incident of Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ took place. It so happened that Sayyidnā Hilāl ﷺ returned from his lands late in the night, when he saw a man with his wife with his own eyes, and listened to their conversation. But he did not do any thing and waited until the dawn, when he went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and narrated the story, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was very unhappy to hear about this incident and felt very bad. In the meantime the people of Anṣār were gathered and started discussing among themselves that the same thing had

happened as was hinted by their chief, and that Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ would be punished with eighty stripes in accordance with the Islamic law, and be debarred for life for giving any evidence. Nevertheless, Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ said 'By Allah I am very hopeful that Allah Ta'ālā will take me out of this predicament'. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī has also quoted that in fact the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after hearing the incident of Sayyidnā Hilāl ﷺ had asked him, according to Islamic law, to produce four eye-witnesses or be prepared for the punishment of eighty stripes on the back. Sayyidnā Hilāl Ibn Umayyah swore an oath by God before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and pleaded that he was honest, and that Allah will surely send down a command which will save his back from flogging. While this conversation was still on Jibra'īl ﷺ descended with the verses containing the law of *li'ān*, that is:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ اَزْوَاجَهُمْ

And those who accuse their wives (of adultery). - 24:6.

Abū Ya'lā has quoted the same version on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ, which also says that when the verses of *li'ān* were revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ gave the good tiding to Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ that Allah Ta'ālā has sent down the solution to his predicament. Hilāl replied that he was hoping the same from Allah Ta'ālā.

Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ called Sayyidnā Hilāl Ibn Umayyah's ﷺ wife also, and when they were both together, he inquired from the wife about the incident. She said that her husband was making a false accusation against her. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Allah knows one of you is a liar, so would you not dread (Allah's torment) and come out with the truth and repent. Then Sayyidnā Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ said 'My parents be sacrificed on you! I have said nothing but truth and whatever I have said is true'. After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ directed that the process of *li'ān* be conducted on both husband and wife according to the revealed verses of the Qur'ān. First Sayyidnā Hilāl ﷺ was asked to testify four times with the wordings of Qur'ān, which are, 'Believing Allah to be present everywhere and seeing everything, I testify that I am honest in my allegation', Sayyidnā Hilāl ﷺ testified four times with the Qur'ānic wordings. When it came to testify the fifth time, of which the Qur'anic wordings are, 'Allah's curse be on me, if I were lying'. At that

time the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidnā Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ؓ, as a warning, that he must be careful and fear Allah, as worldly punishment is lighter than the torment of the Hereafter. The torment of Allah is much more severe than the punishment of people, and that the fifth testimony is the final one, on which the ruling would depend. But Hilāl Ibn Umayyah insisted that he could say under oath that Allah Ta'ālā would not punish him for his testimony in the Hereafter (as he was sure that this was a true testimony). Then he uttered the wordings of the fifth testimony. After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ obtained four oaths, in the similar manner, from his wife. She too swore with Qur'ānic wordings that her husband was lying. When it came to testify the fifth time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked her to wait, and warned her that it was the fifth and final testimony, and as such she should be fearful of Allah, as His torment is much more severe than the punishment by the people, that is the Islamic punishment of adultery. On hearing this, she hesitated to swear and waited in that condition for a while. Then said ultimately 'By Allah I will not disgrace my people', and testified the fifth time, saying that if her husband was true then Allah's wrath be on her. This way when the process of *li'ān* was completed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ separated the husband and wife, that is broke down their marriage, and ruled that the child to be born of this conception will take the mother's name and will not be attributed to the father, but the child should not be disparaged. (Tafsīr Maẓharī quoted from Musnad Aḥmad, authority Ibn 'Abbās).

The second incident

The second incident is also quoted in the Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, and the details of the incident are narrated by Baghawī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ. He has said that the Holy Prophet ﷺ , while standing on *minbar*, related the verses in which it is enjoined to punish the man making false accusation of adultery (حدِّ القذف), that is وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ (24:4). At that time Sayyidnā 'Āṣim Ibn 'Adiyy al-Anṣā ؓ was also present in the crowd. He got up and pleaded 'O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, my life be sacrificed on your honour ! If any one of us discovers his wife lying in bed with another man and narrates this situation, then he will be punished with eighty stripes, and would be debarred from giving evidence for life. Moreover, the Muslims would call him liar. In such a situation how can we get the eyewitnesses immediately? And if we do, and

go in search of eyewitnesses, he would run away after doing his work, by the time we could bring the witnesses.It was the same inquiry made by 'Āṣim Ibn 'Adiyy ﷺ, which was made by Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah ﷺ in the first incident.

This inquiry was made on a Friday. After that it so happened that 'Āṣim Ibn Adiyy's ﷺ cousin, 'Uwaimir, who had married Khaula رضی اللہ عنہما, another cousin of Adiyy's, saw his wife involved with yet another cousin, Sharīk Ibn Saḥmā'. 'Uwaimir ﷺ related this incident to his cousin 'Āṣim Ibn 'Adiyy ﷺ, who recited إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ and went to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ the next day – again a Friday. 'Adiyy ﷺ said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he had made an inquiry on the previous Friday in which he himself has got involved unfortunately, as the same incident has taken place in his family. Baghawī has narrated the incident in great detail as to how were the husband and wife were called and went through the process of *li'ān* (Maẓharī)

This incident is narrated in the Ṣaḥīḥs on the authority of Sayyidnā Sahal Ibn Sa'd Sa'idi ﷺ that 'Uwaimir al-'Ajlānī ﷺ inquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that if someone finds his wife in bed with another man then should he kill that man, as a result of which he will be killed by people or what else should he do? the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that Allah Ta'ālā has revealed an injunction for the case of your wife and yourself. Go and get your wife. Sayyidnā Sahal Ibn Sa'd ﷺ, the narrator of the Ḥadīth, narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ subjected them to the process of *li'ān* in the mosque (This process has been explained above). When the process of *li'ān* was completed after both husband and wife had sworn five times, 'Uwaimir said 'If I still keep her as my wife this will mean as if I had made a false accusation against her. Therefore, I am announcing three divorces to her'. (Maẓharī on authority of Ṣaḥīḥs)

In both these incidents it is reported that the verses of *li'ān* were revealed for that particular incident. Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and Shaikh ul Islam Nawawi رحمہ اللہ تعالی have noted the alikeness in the two by explaining that it looks the first incident was that of Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ, and the verses of *li'ān* were revealed in that connection, and immediately after that 'Uwaimir ﷺ was also confronted with a similar incident, which he presented before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, perhaps not

knowing Hilāl Ibn Umayyah's ﷺ incident, which had occurred earlier. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ told him the judgement in his case. This appears plausible because, in the case of Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ the wordings are فنزل جبرئيل (Then Jibra'īl descended with these verses), while in the case of 'Uwaimir ﷺ the wordings are قد أنزل الله فيک (Allah has revealed about you), the meaning of which could be that Allah Ta'ālā has enjoined His command in a case similar to yours. والله اعلم (Maẓharī)

Ruling

When *li'ān* has taken place between husband and wife before the judge then that woman becomes forbidden for good for that man, just like foster relatives are forbidden for marriage among themselves forever. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a Ḥadīth المتلاعنان لايجتمعان ابدًا (The spouses who have gone through *li'ān* can never join each other). Unlawfulness establishes immediately after the *li'ān*. As for the woman's second marriage with another man, she is allowed after the expiry of her *'iddah* period of three months, when she is divorced by her first husband or if he had just said that he had left her. This is the ruling given by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى. But if the husband does not carry out any of the two alternatives, then the ruler or the judge would order the separation, which would have the same effect as the divorce, and after that she would complete three periods of menses, and then she would be free to marry another man. (Maẓharī etc.)

Ruling

When the *li'ān* is completed, after that the child that would born from that conception would not have the name of her husband, but would be called after the name of the mother. The Holy Prophet ﷺ gave this ruling in both the cases of Hilāl Ibn Umayyah and 'Uwaimir 'Aljāni رضی الله عنهم اجمعین.

Ruling

Although the torment of Hereafter would increase on the one who is liar, after the *li'ān*, but the punishment of the world be annulled. Similarly, it is not permissible to call the woman an adulterer nor is it permissible to call her child illegitimate. This was also ruled by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the case of Hilāl Ibn Umayyah ﷺ. وقضى بان لا تُرمٰى ولا ولدُ ها.

Verses 11 - 26

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ جَآءُوْ بِالْاِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ط لَا تَحْسَبُوْهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ ط بَلْ
هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ط لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْاِثْمِ ج وَالَّذِيْ تَوَلّٰى
كِبْرَهٗ مِنْهُمْ لَهٗ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ لَوْلَآ اِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا لا وَّقَالُوْا هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٢﴾ لَوْلَا جَآءُوْ
عَلَيْهِ بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاِذْ لَمْ يَاْتُوْا بِالشُّهَدَآءِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ
الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ
لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيْ مَآ اَفَضْتُمْ فِيْهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهٗ بِاَلْسِنَتِكُمْ
وَتَقُوْلُوْنَ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ وَّ تَحْسَبُوْنَهٗ هَيِّنًا صلے ق وَّهُوَ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ قُلْتُمْ مَّا يَكُوْنُ لَنَآ اَنْ نَّتَكَلَّمَ
بِهٰذَا صلے ق سُبْحٰنَكَ هٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَعِظُكُمُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ تَعُوْدُوْا
لِمِثْلِهٖٓ اَبَدًا اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ط وَاللّٰهُ
عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ تَشِيْعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ لا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ط وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ رَءُوْفٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ط وَمَنْ يَّتَّبِعْ
خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَاِنَّهٗ يَاْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ط وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ مَا زَكٰى مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ اَبَدًا لا وَّلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُزَكِّيْ مَنْ
يَّشَآءُ ط وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَا يَاْتَلِ اُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ
وَالسَّعَةِ اَنْ يُّؤْتُوْٓا اُولِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنَ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ صلے وَلْيَعْفُوْا وَلْيَصْفَحُوْا ط اَلَا تُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ط وَاللّٰهُ

غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ الْغٰفِلٰتِ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ لُعِنُوْا فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ اَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَاَيْدِيْهِمْ وَاَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يُّوَفِّيْهِمُ اللّٰهُ دِيْنَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَالْحَقُّ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٢٥﴾ اَلْخَبِيْثٰتُ لِلْخَبِيْثِيْنَ وَالْخَبِيْثُوْنَ لِلْخَبِيْثٰتِ وَالطَّيِّبٰتُ لِلطَّيِّبِيْنَ وَالطَّيِّبُوْنَ لِلطَّيِّبٰتِ اُولٰٓئِكَ مُبَرَّءُوْنَ مِمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

Those who have come up with the false imputation are a gang among you. Do not think it is bad for you; rather, it is good for you. Everyone of them is liable for what he earned of the sin. And the one who undertook the major part of it, for him there is a mighty punishment. [11]

Why - when you (O believers) heard of it – did the believing men and the believing women not think well on their own selves and (why did they not) say, 'This is a manifest lie'. [12] **Why did they (the accusers) not bring four witnesses to prove this? So, as they did not bring the witnesses, they are the liars in the sight of Allah.** [13] **And had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you, and His mercy in this world and in the Hereafter, a great punishment would have reached you for what you got indulged in -** [14] **when you were welcoming it with your tongues and were saying with your mouths something of which you had no knowledge, and were taking it as a trivial matter, while in the sight of Allah it was grave.** [15] **And why, when you heard of it, did you not say, 'It is not for us to speak about this. Pure are You (O Allah). This is a terrible calumny.'** [16] **Allah admonishes you never to repeat something like this, if you are believers.** [17] **And Allah makes the signs clear to you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.** [18]

Surely, those who like that shamelessness spreads among the believers, for them there is painful

punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you do not know. [19] **And had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you, and His mercy and that Allah is Very-Kind, Very-Merciful (you would have been destroyed).** [20]

O those who believe, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, (should know that) he orders (one to commit) shameless acts and evil deeds. And had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you, and His mercy, not a single person from you would have ever attained purity. But Allah purifies whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [21]

And the men of grace and wealth among you should not swear against giving (their charitable gifts) to the kinsmen and the poor and to those who have migrated in the way of Allah. And they should forgive and forego. Do you not like that Allah forgives you? And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [22]

Surely, those who level a false charge against the chaste, naïve and believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them there is a mighty punishment [23] **on the Day their tongues, their hands and their legs will testify against them of what they used to do.** [24] **On that day Allah will give them their due recompense in full and they will know that Allah is the Truth Who makes all things manifest.** [25]

Vile women are for vile men, and vile men are for vile women. And good women are for good men and good men are for good women. Those are free from what they (the accusers) say. For them there is forgiveness and a graceful provision. [26]

Interconnection of verses

As has been mentioned earlier, the major part of Sūrah An-Nūr is in connection with those injunctions which are related with protection and security of chastity and continence. Diametrically to that, any attempt to debase the chastity and honour would be in violation of the injunction, for which the punishment in the world and the torment in the Hereafter are enjoined. In this connection, first the maximum punishment of adultery

(حد زنا), then the punishment for false accusation (حد قذف) and after that the process of *li'ān* have already been described. False accusation of adultery against a chaste woman, without the support of four eyewitnesses, is held to be a great sin, and for such a person the punishment of eighty stripes is prescribed. This injunction is in regard to common chaste Muslim women. But the case of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا was quite different and grave, when the hypocrites fabricated a false slander against her in 6th Hijra, and some Muslims also indulged in mentioning it. Indeed it was a much serious and grave situation than for an ordinary chaste Muslim woman, hence Allah Ta'ālā revealed ten verses at that point exonerating her from the accusation and to project her purity and chastity. These verses announce the exoneration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا on one hand and a warning of severe punishment to all those who were involved in the slander in any way. This incident of imputation is called the episode of *ifk* (false imputation) in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. The word *Ifk* means worst type of lie, imputation or slander. In order to understand the explanation of these verses it is necessary to know the background of the incident of *Ifk*. Therefore, it will be in order to give a brief account of this episode to begin with.

The incident of *Ifk* and the slander

This incident has been narrated with extra ordinary details in the Ṣaḥīḥs and other books of Ḥadīth. However its brief version is as follows: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ went for the battle (بنی المصطلق) of Banī Muṣṭaliq, also known as battle (مریسیع) of *Muraisī'*, in the 6th Hijra, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا amongst the mothers of believers, was also accompanying him. The common practice was that first she would sit in her litter and then it was placed on the back of the camel. It was because by that time the injunction in regard to *ḥijāb* had been revealed. After the battle was over and the caravan was returning to Madīnah it stopped for camping to spend the night. Towards the end of the night an announcement was made to the effect that the caravan would soon be departing, so that people should get ready after completing the necessities. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا felt the call of nature and went out to ease herself. There the string of her necklace was broken and it fell down. It took her some time to locate it, so she got a little late. By the time

she returned to the camp, the caravan had departed. As for her camel, her litter was mounted on it's back without realizing that she was not sitting in it. This happened because she was so young and frail at that time that her absence from the litter was not noticed; and also because the litter was covered. On her return to the camp when she did not find the caravan there, she did not panic nor ran helter-skelter to locate it. Instead, she acted very prudently and sat down at the camping place after wrapping herself. She did this knowing the Holy Prophet ﷺ very well that when he will not find her in her litter (هَودج) he will send out men to locate her at the camping place, and if she were gone some other place to locate them, it will only complicate things for the searching party. So, it was best to wait for them there, at the camp. Since it was still dark and she was tired, she fell asleep.

On the other hand, it so happened that Sayyidnā Safwān Ibn Mu'aṭṭal ؓ, whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ had assigned the duty to stay behind the caravan and pick up things if forgotten by anyone in a hurry, reached the camp at dawn. He saw someone sleeping. So he went there and recognized Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, whom he had seen before the injunction of *ḥijāb* was revealed. Seeing her there like that, he was extremely dismayed and uttered إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ. On hearing his voice she was awakened, and covered her face. Then Sayyidnā Safwān ؓ brought his camel near her and made it sit down. Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا sat on the camel's back and rode on, while he was holding the string of the camel and walking in front. 'Abdullāh Ibn Ubbayy was a very wicked hypocrite and enemy of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He got hold of this news and the wretched man fabricated shameless imputation against her. Unfortunately, some naïve Muslims also narrated the gossip on hearsay; for instance Sayyidnā Ḥassān and Misṭaḥ ؓ among the males and Sayyidah Ḥamnah رضی اللہ عنہا from the females. (Tafsīr Ad-Durr-al-Manthūr has reported this version with reference to Ibn Marduwaih on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ --- اعانہ ای عبداللہ ابن أبی حسان ومسطح و حمنة)

When this slander of the hypocrite was publicized, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself was also very hurt. As for Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, it was but obvious to get hurt extremely. Even ordinary Muslims were also extremely pained on the spread of this totally false and fabricated slander. This went on for about a month, but at last Allah Ta'ālā revealed

these verses to exonerate her and condemn those who were involved in its fabrication or spread, in any way. The commentary on these verses will follow soon.

In accordance with the Qur'ānic injunction, which has been detailed above under the heading of punishment for false accusation (حد القذف), those who were involved in the spread of false slander were asked to produce the evidence in support of their accusation. Since that was a totally unfounded accusation, they could not produce any evidence whatsoever. As a consequence, the Holy Prophet ﷺ awarded the punishment of false accusation (حد القذف) to them, and each one of them was flogged with eighty stripes. Bazzār and Ibn Marduwaih have reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ awarded the punishment to three Muslims, namely, Misṭaḥ, Ḥamnah and Ḥassān ؓ, while Ṭabarani has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had awarded double the punishment of false accusation to 'Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy, the hypocrite, who had fabricated this slander. After that the Muslims repented, but the hypocrites remained as they were. (Bayān ul Qur'ān)

Commentary

Unique proficiency of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's رضی اللہ عنہا , and the remaining part of the incident of *Ifk*

The enemies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did their best to harm him, and did every thing they could possibly think to afflict him. Amongst all the afflictions which were perpetrated by the infidels, perhaps the most severe and emotionally torturous was to pass slander on the most exalted, proficient, learned, and respected mother of the believers amongst all his pure wives. With the contemptible false slander the respected name of Sayyidnā Safwān Ibn Mu'aṭṭal ؓ was also maligned by the hypocrite 'Abdulālh Ibn Ubayy. The hypocrites gave the slander different colours and then spread it. The most distressful thing in this episode was that some simple Muslims were carried away by the unfortunate slander and started narrating it as well. The unfounded slander would have been exposed by the truth in a few days time, but for compensating the emotional torture inflicted on Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah and on the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself by it and for exonerating her, Allah Ta'ālā did not rest just at hinting at the episode in a revelation, but revealed almost two *ruku's* for

her exoneration. Not only that, but all those who had fabricated this slander, and those who had participated in narrating it, were warned to face the torment in this world and in the Hereafter. Perhaps never such warnings were revealed on any occasion.

In fact this incident of *Ifk* has brought into the open and highlighted the excellence of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's superior wisdom and intelligence along with her chastity and sanctity. That is why in the very first of the above quoted verses Allah Ta'ālā has asked not to consider this incident as bad for her, rather it was a blessing. What could be a greater blessing than this, that Allah Ta'ālā has confirmed her purity in no less than ten verses, which will be recited until the Dooms Day. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها had herself said that she was quite confident that Allah Ta'ālā would exonerate her and clarify her position through a *Waḥy* (message to the Holy Prophet ﷺ), but did not consider herself to be so fortunate that Qur'ānic verses would be revealed referring to her person, which will be recited for ever. At this point it will help the readers to know some details about the incident for understanding the verses. So, they are briefly narrated here:

On return from that journey Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها got involved in her household affairs, and was not the least aware of the rumor that was circulated by the hypocrites about her. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī has narrated on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها herself that after the return from the journey she fell slightly sick, the main cause of which was that she did not notice the favour and grace from the Holy Prophet ﷺ towards her, which was his norm. Instead, she noticed during that period that when he would come home, he would only inquire about her health after the salutation and go back. Since she did not know at all anything about the rumor that was being circulated about her, hence she could not understand the cause of his attitude towards her, but took the grief to heart, which started telling on her health. One day she went out in the open to ease herself, as there used to be no latrines in the houses in those days. Because she was not keeping well she took along Misṭaḥ's mother with her. When they were returning home after she had eased herself, the foot of Misṭaḥ's mother got entangled in her sheet and she fell down. As she fell down she uttered the phrase تَعِسَ مِسْطَحٌ. This phrase is normally used by Arabs while cursing someone. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله

عنها was taken aback on hearing this phrase from Misṭaḥ's mother for her own son , and said to her that it was very bad that she was cursing her own son, who was such a gentleman and who had participated in the battle of Badr. On that Misṭaḥ's mother asked her 'My dear girl, don't you know, this son of mine, what has he been saying around?' Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا inquired as to what had he been saying around. Then Misṭaḥ's mother told her the whole story of *Ifk* fabricated by the people, and how her son was involved in it's spreading. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا goes on to say that on hearing this her sickness was doubled. When she returned home and the Holy Prophet ﷺ came and inquired about her health after salutation as usual, she asked his permission whether she could go to her parent's house. He consented to her going to their house. The idea was to take them in confidence and have consultation. So she consulted her mother, who consoled her and said that there were people who were jealous of women like her, and spread rumors like that. So, she need not worry about it. Things would get alright on their own. On that she retorted 'Allah is Pure / Subhan Allah! People have been talking about that. How can I be patient?' Then the whole night she cried, and did not sleep a wink. On the other hand the Holy Prophet ﷺ was extremely grieved on the spread of this false story, more so, because he did not receive any revelation on the incident during that period. Therefore, he called Sayyidnā 'Alī and Usāmah Ibn Zaid رضی اللہ عنہما, who were both members of his household, and consulted them as to what should he do under the circumstances. Sayyidnā Usāmah Ibn Zaid رضی اللہ عنہ said very emphatically that on the basis of his information he had no misgivings about Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا whatsoever. There is absolutely nothing, which could point toward any mistrust. Hence he need not pay any heed to such rumors. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضی اللہ عنہ advised him (in order to bring him out of his grief and anxiety) that Allah Ta'ālā had not put any restriction on him, hence if he had any unpleasant feelings about Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, because of the rumors, then there are many other women. Moreover he suggested another alternative to remove his unpleasant feelings, and advised him to make inquiries about her from Barīrah رضی اللہ عنہا, who was the slave girl working for Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا . Hence, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made inquiries from Barīrah رضی اللہ عنہا ,who submitted that she did not see anything unbecoming in Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا except that sometimes, because of her young

age, she would leave the dough in the open and go to sleep, and the goat would eat up the dough. (After this the Ḥadīth narrates the address of the Holy Prophet ﷺ from the rostrum in great detail in which he had complained about those who had fabricated the accusation and those who had spread the slander. A brief account of what happened next is as follows).

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا goes on to say "I cried the whole day and the second night also continuously. My parents had also come to me, as they feared that I would break down with grief. While my parents were sitting with me the Holy Prophet ﷺ came in and sat down alongside me. He had not sit with me before ever since this incident had started. Then he recited the *khuṭbah* of *shahādah* and said 'O, 'Ā'ishah, I have received this information about you. If you are free from blame, then Allah will definitely exonerate you (that is express exoneration through revelation), but if you have slipped, then beg for Allah's pardon with repentance, because when the servant invokes His mercy after admitting his sin then Allah Ta'ālā accepts his repentance'. After the Holy Prophet ﷺ had completed his discourse, my tears dried up completely. There was not a drop in my eyes. I requested my father, Abū Bakr ﷺ, to give an answer to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but he excused himself saying what could he say. Then I asked my mother to give an answer, and she too excused herself saying as to what could she say. Then per force I had to speak. I was only a young girl, and by then had not learnt much even the Qur'ān". In such a perplexing condition of grief and distress that she was in, even extremely learned and intelligent persons would have found it very difficult to express themselves in a balanced manner, but what Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا said at that time is a piece of highly intellectual and scholarly discourse. Her wordings are reproduced verbatim below:

واللّٰہ لقد عرفت لقد سمعتم ھٰذا الحدیث حتّٰی استقرّ فی انفسکم وصدقتم بہ، ولئن قلت لکم: انّی بریئۃ، واللّٰہ یعلم انّی بریئۃ، لا تصدّقونی ولئن اعترفت لکم بامر، واللّٰہ یعلم انی منہ بریئۃ، لتصدقونی، واللّٰہ لا اجد لی ولکم مثلا الا کما قال ابو یوسف: فصبر جمیل واللّٰہ المستعان علٰی ما تصفون

"By God, I fully realize that you listened to this talk and kept on listening until it made inroads into your heart, and you have confirmed this (by your actions). Now if I say that I am free

> from this blame, as Allah knows well that I am in reality, then you will not verify my statement. And if I make admission of the accusation, of which Allah knows I am free, then you will agree with my admission. Wallah, now I do not see any example on the issue between you and me, except the one which the father of Yūsuf ﷺ (Ya'qūb ﷺ), said after hearing the wrong statement of his sons that 'So patience is best. And it is Allah whose help is sought against what you describe."

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا related further that "After having said so I went away and lied down on my bed. I was confident that since I was free from the blame in reality, Allah Ta'ālā would surely exonerate me by sending down a revelation. But I did not have the slightest idea or expectation that in my case Qur'ānic verses will be revealed, which will be recited forever. It was because I considered my position to be much lower than that. All I had expected was that probably my exoneration will be revealed to him in his dream". Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا goes on to narrate that "the Holy Prophet ﷺ had not got up from that company yet, nor anyone from the household had got up, when he was overtaken by the condition which he used to experience at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān. In this condition he used to perspire profusely on the forehead. When this condition was over, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ got up smiling, and the very first thing that he said was ابشری یا عائشۃ اما اللہ فقد ابراک that is "O 'Ā'ishah, listen the good tiding . As for Allah Ta'ālā, He has exonerated you". Then my mother said to me "Get up and go to the Holy Prophet ﷺ ". I replied, "I do not feel obliged to any one in this case, except Allah, nor would I get up. I am thankful to my Lord, and it is He who has exonerated me.".

Few distinctions of Sayyidah Ṣiddīqua رضی اللہ عنہا:

While explaining these verses Imām Baghawī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has said that there were some distinctions of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا which no woman other than her could get, and Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا also used to relate them with a sense of pride (as honorable gift). First, that before the marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ Jibra'īl ﷺ had brought to him her image wrapped in a silk cloth, and said to him 'she is your wife', (As reported by At-Tirmidhī – from 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا) while some other versions say that Jibra'īl had brought this image in his palm.

Second, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not marry any maiden girl

other than her.

Third, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ died in her lap.

Fourth, that he ﷺ was buried in her house.

Fifth, that he ﷺ had received revelation even at that time also when he used to be with Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا under the same quilt. None other wives was granted this distinction ever.

Sixth, that her رضی اللہ عنہا exoneration was sent down from the Heaven.

Seventh, that she was the daughter of the caliph of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and was herself a Ṣiddīqua رضی اللہ عنہا, and was among those whom Allah Ta'ālā had promised forgiveness and bountiful sustenance even during their lifetime. (Maẓharī)

After seeing Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's رضی اللہ عنہا scholarly research, understanding of jurisprudence and eloquent expression, Sayyidnā Mūsā Ibn Ṭalḥah رضی اللہ عنہ commented that he had never come across a person more eloquent than her. (Tirmidhī)

Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī has related that when Sayyidnā Yūsuf علیہ السلام was falsely accused, Allah Ta'ālā exonerated him through the evidence of a baby by granting him speech, and when Sayyidah Maryam علیہا السلام was falsely accused, Allah Ta'ālā exonerated her through the evidence of her son, 'Īsā علیہ السلام, but when false accusation was leveled against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا , then Allah Ta'ālā sent down ten verses of the Holy Qur'ān to declare her exoneration, which has further enhanced her respect and stature.

Now the specific sentences of these verses will be discussed and elaborated:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُو بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ

Those who have come up with the false imputation are a gang among you. 24:11.

Literal meaning of *Ifk* (إفك) is to turn over, reverse or to change. The worst type of lie which turns the truth to falsehood and the false as truth, and labels the pious and God fearing as sinner, and the sinner as pious

and God fearing, also falls under the connotation of *Ifk*. *'Uṣbah* :عُصْبَة means a group of ten to forty persons, but is also used for less or more persons. The word مِنْكُمْ (among you) in the verse refers to Muslims. Although the actual fabricator of the slander was 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy, who was a hypocrite and not a Muslim, but since the hypocrites used to claim themselves as Muslims, he too has been included within the fold of (مِنْكُمْ). Among the Muslims two men and one woman got involved in the spread of slander, who were awarded the punishment of false accusation by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after the revelation of these verses. But all Muslims felt penitence and their repentance was accepted by Allah Ta'ālā. Among them were Sayyidnā Ḥassān and Misṭaḥ ؓ, who had both participated in the battle of Badr, and for whom Allah Ta'ālā has declared forgiveness in the Qur'ān. For this very reason Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا used to dislike if any one would speak ill of Sayyidnā Ḥassān ؓ before her, although he was one of those two men who were punished for false accusation. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا used to say that Ḥassān ؓ was the one who had defended the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his poetry against the infidels. Hence, no one should speak ill of him. Whenever he used to visit Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, she would make him sit with dignity and respect. (Maẓharī etc.)

لَا تَحْسَبُوْهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ

Do not think it is bad for you - 24:11.

This sentence is addressed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, Ṣafwān ؓ and all the Muslims, who were hurt by the spread of this rumor. The purport of the sentence is that you should not feel bad about this incident, because after the exoneration declared in the Qur'ān by Allah Ta'ālā her esteem has been raised further, and those who were involved in rumor-mongering were warned strongly in the Qur'ān, which will be recited until the Dooms Day.

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْاِثْمِ

Everyone of them is liable for what he earned of the sin - 24:11.

It means that whoever had taken part in the spread of this slander, his sin has been recorded exactly in the same proportion as was his share in the spread of the slander, and he will be punished accordingly. The one who had fabricated this rumor, which will be dealt later, deserves the

most severe punishment, and the one who endorsed the rumor when it reached him, a little less than that, and the one who kept quiet after hearing it, still less than that.

وَالَّذِیْ تَوَلّٰی کِبْرَهٗ مِنْهُمْ لَهٗ عَذَابٌ عَظِیْمٌ

And the one who undertook the major part of it, for him there is a mighty punishment - 24:11.

The word کِبر means big, large or great. Here it means that the one who has taken big part in the slander, that is who fabricated it and passed on to others, for him is the great punishment. The indication is toward 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy (Baghawi etc.).

لَوْلَآ اِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ خَیْرًا ۙ وَّقَالُوْا هٰذَآ اِفْکٌ مُّبِیْنٌ

Why - when you (O believers) heard of it – did the believing men and the believing women not think well on their own selves and (why did they not) say, 'This is a manifest lie'. - 24:12.

It means that when the Muslim men women heard about this slander they should have a good assumption about their own-self – that is about their Muslim brother and sister – and declared that it was but an open lie. In this verse quite a few things need attention. In the first place the Holy Qur'ān has hinted by the word بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ (on their own selves) that if a Muslim defames and disgraces another Muslim, he in fact disgraces himself, because the relationship of Islam has brought them all together as one body. A similar expression is used by the Holy Qur'ān wherever the close tie between a Muslim and the whole Ummah is to be emphasized, for instance, a verse says لَاتَلْمِزُوْٓا اَنْفُسَکُمْ (49:11) which means 'Do not cast aspersion on your own-self', which actually means do not cast aspersion on any of your Muslim brethren – man or woman. At another place the Qur'ān says لَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا اَنْفُسَکُمْ, (4:29) which means 'Do not kill yourselves'. Here again the sense is the same, that is, do not kill any of your Muslim brethren. Yet at a third place it says وَلَا تُخْرِجُوْنَ اَنْفُسَکُمْ مِّنْ دِیَارِکُمْ, (2:84) which means 'You shall not drive out yourselves from your homes'. Here also it means not to expel any Muslim from his house. At a fourth place it says فَسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰٓی اَنْفُسِکُمْ, which means 'Salute your own-self', which in fact means, salute your Muslim brethren. All these verses point toward one theme, that a Muslim who casts aspersion on another Muslim or causes oppression and harm to another Muslim, he in fact casts aspersion

and causes harm to himself, because it leads to defamation of the whole Muslim Ummah, as the poet Saadi has said:

چواز قومے یکے بے دانشی کرد ☆ نہ کِہ را منزلت ماند نہ مِہ را

"When a single person from a nation does an unwise act, no one from that nation, big or small, can achieve a respectful place (in the eyes of others).

It was this teaching of the Qur'ān which brought up the Muslims into prominence, and when they gained prominence, it was the whole nation which was uplifted, both collectively and individually. One can see the result of giving up of the Qur'ānic teachings, that the Muslims have slumped into oblivion, again both collectively and individually.

The other point, which needs attention in this verse, is that after having said لَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ (Why, when you (O believers) heard of it) it was in the fitness of things that the address form should have been used by saying, "why did you not think well of your ownselves". But the verse has opted for "the believers" instead of "you". The Holy Qur'ān at this point has changed its form and said ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ instead ظَنَنْتُمْ. In this form there is a subtle allusion that those who had committed this act were not fit to be called Mu'mins (believers) to the extent of this act, because it was the demand of faith that a Muslim should have stuck to the favourable view for another Muslim.

The third point which needs attention is that in the last sentence of this verse وَقَالُوْا هٰذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِيْنٌ (24:12) it has been instilled that it was the demand of faith that the Muslims on hearing this rumor should have immediately rejected it as a total lie. This proves that to think good about any other Muslim is an obligatory demand of faith, unless an act of sin or evil is proved against him under Islamic law. Likewise, it is also the demand of faith to call an attribute of a sin or evil against a Muslim a lie, if there is no proof under Islamic law against him.

Ruling

This has proved that to think good about all Muslims men and women is obligatory, unless proved otherwise by Islamic law. And if someone accuses a Muslim without the proof under Islamic law, then the rejection of that accusation and to declare it as a lie is also obligatory, because it is nothing but backbiting and defaming an innocent Muslim. (Maẓharī)

لَوْلَا جَآءُوْ عَلَيْهِ بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاِذْ لَمْ يَاْتُوْا بِالشُّهَدَآءِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ

Why did they (the accusers) not bring four witnesses to prove this? So, as they did not bring the witnesses, they are the liars in the sight of Allah - 24:13.

In the first sentence of this verse it is emphasized that the Muslims should have demanded to produce evidence from those who were spreading this rumor, instead of becoming instrumental in passing on the rumor to others. Since the accusation of adultery cannot be proved without the production of four eyewitnesses, it should have been demanded of them either to produce four eyewitnesses or keep quiet. In the second sentence of the verse it is declared that, as they could not produce four eyewitnesses, so they are the ones who are liars before Allah.

It is worth noting here that it is quite probable that a person sees such an event with his own eyes, but is unable to produce four witnesses. And if he relates the event, which, in fact, he has seen with his own eyes, then how can he be called a liar. More so, to call him liar before Allah is not at all understandable, because Allah knows the truth about every thing happening. So, how could he be declared a liar before Allah, when the incident has actually taken place. There are two answers to this. First, here عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ (in the sight of Allah) stands for Allah's command and the rule of Allah, Therefore, it means that in accordance with the rule of Allah and His command this person would be declared a liar and awarded the punishment of false accusation, because the command of Allah is not to relate the incidence, despite the fact that you have seen it, if four witnesses are not available. If someone relates it without the support of four witnesses, then he will be declared liar by law and will be punished.

The second explanation is that, it is against the dignity of a Muslim to do something having no purpose and object, especially a thing which would put blame on a Muslim. Hence, a Muslim should testify the commission of a crime or sin against another Muslim only with the intent of controlling and eradicating the crime and sin, and not for the purpose of defaming or hurting someone. So, if a person relates such an incident without the support of four witnesses claiming that he is doing it with the intent of reforming the society and for removing the evil from it, knowing that without the production of four witnesses he would neither be able to

prove the crime according to requirements of the Islamic law nor would the accused be punished, and on the other hand he will himself be liable to punishment for relating a lie, in such a situation he is عِندَ اللهِ (in the sight of Allah) a liar in the proclamation of his intent, claiming that he was testifying the incident for reforming the society and removing the evil. It is for the simple reason that in the absence of witnesses it is not possible to harbor this intention under the Islamic code. (Maẓharī)

An important and necessary warning

In both the above verses it is emphasized that every Muslim should have good opinion about other Muslims, and it is made obligatory for them to contradict and deny any insinuation and accusations without proof against the Muslims. But one should not have any doubt as to why the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not have the belief that the rumor was false, and as such denied it at the outset, instead he suffered for a month and asked Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا to beg Allah's pardon if there was a slip on her part. (Bukhārī)

The explanation for this is that the anxiety of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not inconsistent with the injunction for Muslims to have good opinion about other Muslims, because he neither denied this rumor nor did he act on its exigency, and also he did not like the spread of the rumor. All did he say in the gathering of companions was ما علمت على اهلى الاخيرا (Bukhārī) that is, 'I do not know anything but good and virtuous about my wife,. All these things are proofs of acting in conformity with the injunction of the verses of having good opinion. However, the definite and absolute belief, which could also remove the natural anxiety, followed when the verses of exoneration were revealed.

The substance of explanation is that in such a situation, creation of doubts and anxiety is but natural, but to act with care and caution, as the Holy Prophet ﷺ did, was not against having good opinion about the Muslims, especially when no action was taken on its exigency. Those Muslims who were awarded the punishment for false accusation and were reprimanded in these two verses, had actually acted on the exigency of the rumor and were involved in its spread. Spreading falsehood was unlawful and punishable even before the revelation of these verses.

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِىْ مَآ اَفَضْتُمْ فِيْهِ

عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

And had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you, and His mercy in this world and in the Hereafter, a great punishment would have reached you for what you got indulged in - 24:14.

This verse was revealed for those believers who had by mistake got somehow involved in the slander, but then repented and begged Allah's pardon. Some of them were even punished, but all of them were told through this verse that the crime they had committed was a very grave one, and on that crime they could have been subjected to punishment even in this world, like the one sent down on earlier people. In addition, they would have also been punished severely in the Hereafter, but Allah's dealings with those believers were that of grace and mercy, both in this world and in the Hereafter. Hence, the chastisement was withdrawn from them. The manifestation of Allah's grace and mercy in the world is that, first, the Divine help was granted to adopt Islam and its faith, then the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was accorded, which is an impediment for the award of punishment, and then again the Divine help was granted to repent sincerely and beg Allah's forgiveness for the sin which was committed, and ultimately the repentance was accepted and the sin was pardoned. While in the Hereafter, the token of Allah's grace and mercy is that He has promised to forgive and overlook and grant pardon.

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ

When you were welcoming it with your tongues - 24:15.

The word تَلَقّى means to make inquiries from each other (to be inquisitive) and repeat before others. Here it means to repeat hearsay without probe and proof. (1)

وَّ تَحْسَبُوْنَهُ هَيِّنًا ۖ وَّهُوَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِيْمٌ

And were taking it as a trivial matter, while in the sight of Allah it was grave - 24:15.

It means that you regarded it a trifle matter that you heard it and passed it on to others. But in the sight of Allah it was a great sin that without probing and finding out any proof you passed on something to

(1). Lexically the word also means 'welcoming'. This meaning is adopted in the translation of the text, because it also covers the meaning of receiving and conveying the news without hesitation. (Editor)

others to cause harm to other Muslims and to make their life miserable.

وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ قُلْتُمْ مَّا يَكُوْنُ لَنَآ اَنْ نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهٰذَا ق سُبْحٰنَكَ هٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيْمٌ

And why, when you heard of it, did you not say, 'It is not for us to speak about this. Pure are You (O Allah). This is a terrible calumny.' - 24:16.

In this verse the same advice is repeated which was imparted in an earlier verse, with further elaboration as to what should the Muslims do in such a situation when they hear a rumor. The advice is that they should say in categorical terms that they are not allowed even to mention such a thing for which there is no proof. It is a very grave accusation.

A doubt and its answer

If someone has a doubt that just as the truth of an event cannot be verified without a proof, and hence it is unlawful to mention it and spread it, likewise, the report of that event should not be believed to be a lie and a 'terrible calumny' without a proof of its being a lie. The answer to this doubt is that it is the integral spirit of Islam to consider every Muslim as free from sins, and this is based on reasoning. Anything contrary to this proven reality is a lie if put forward without a proof, and no further proof is required to prove this assertion a lie. This is enough to call it a slander if a believer Muslim is blamed for a crime without proof.

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ تَشِيْعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ لا فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ

Surely, those who like that shamelessness spreads among the believers, for them there is a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter - 24:19.

Those who had taken part in any way in the slander are again condemned in this verse, and are warned with the punishment in the world and in the Hereafter. An extra element in this verse is that those who propagate such rumors actually want the spread of obscenity and immorality among the Muslims.

The Qur'ānic system for the prevention of obscenity

The Holy Qur'ān has drawn out this unique system for the prevention of obscenity that, in the first place such a news should not spread, and if at all it is leaked out, it should be backed up with lawful proof, so that the

punishment of adultery is also executed publicly, immediately after the spread of the news. This way the publicity itself will serve as a preventive measure. If there were no condition of lawful proof, then it would have been lot easy to pass on and publicize such scandals, especially, when there is no punishment attached to it. Absence of any fear against spreading scandals leads to minimizing the repulsion against immorality and obscenity from the people's mind; rather it encourages to indulge in such crimes and to propagate them. This is an every day experience that this sort of scandals is published in the newspapers daily. Young men and women read them frequently. As a result, the intensity of such wicked acts is minimized gradually, and instead a slow inclination for indulging in them develops in their minds. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'ān has allowed publicity of such news only in such situations when it is supported with lawful evidence, so that people should see the severe punishment for the obscene crime along with the news of adultery when they learn about it. Where there is no proof and punishment, Qur'ān has proclaimed the publicity of such news as a tool for spreading obscenity among the Muslims. This vital point needs to be pondered by the Muslims. This verse actually emphasizes that to give publicity to scandals without proof will invite very severe punishment both in this world and in the Hereafter. The punishment in the Hereafter will naturally follow after the Dooms Day, and thus cannot be experienced here, but the punishment of the world can be seen. So, those who were punished for false accusation have in fact experienced the punishment of the world. If anyone has escaped the execution of the punishment for want of proof needed for the award of this punishment, even then he has earned the punishment (which will be executed in the Hereafter). For the implication of the verse even this is enough.

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُّؤْتُوْٓا أُولِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنَ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ
فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ صلے وَلْيَعْفُوْا وَلْيَصْفَحُوْا ط اَلَا تُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ط وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

And the men of grace and wealth among you should not swear against giving (their charitable gifts) to the kinsmen and the poor and to those who have migrated in the way of Allah. And they should forgive and forego. Do you not like that Allah forgives you? And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful - 24:22.

Teachings of high morals for the exalted companions

The word ائتلاء means to swear. Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ and Ḥassān ﷺ got involved in the incident of slandering Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا from amongst the Muslims. They were awarded punishment for false accusation by the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the revelation of exoneration verses. Both Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ and Ḥassān ﷺ were illustrious companions and had taken part in the battle of Badr, but they slipped on this occasion and received Divine help for the sincere repentance. Then the way exoneration was revealed by Allah Ta'ālā for Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, in the same manner it was also declared that the repentance of these believers was accepted and they were pardoned.

Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ ﷺ was a relative of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ, and was a poor person. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ used to help him materially. When the involvement of Misṭaḥ ﷺ in the spread of the incident of *Ifk* was established, then Sayyidnā Abū Bakr's ﷺ paternal love for the daughter surged up, and he was annoyed with Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ ﷺ as a natural corollary, because her feelings were deeply injured by him. He then swore an oath that he would never help Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ ﷺ materially. It is obvious that to help any specific poor person is not obligatory for a Muslim, and if someone stops the material help he used to give to a poor person, it is not a sin .But Allah Ta'ālā wanted to make the illustrious group of companions as a model for the society. So, whereas on the one hand those who had slipped were granted Divine help to repent sincerely and reform themselves, on the other hand those who had sworn not to help any more the poor people, because of the natural grief and displeasure, were imparted wisdom of supreme ethics in this verse, that they should break their oath and expiate for it. It is below their dignity to stop the material help. They should also forgive and overlook, the way Allah has forgiven them.

Since it was not a religious obligation on Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ to help Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ ﷺ, therefore the Qur'ān has adopted the line to say that those whom Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed the knowledge and excellence, and who are granted the means to spend in the way of Allah, they should be careful not to undertake such an oath. The words أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ وَالسَّعَةِ (the men of grace and wealth) are used to put across this meaning.

The last sentence of this verse is اَلَا تُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَاللّٰهُ لَكُمْ, (24:22) which says

'Do you not like that Allah forgives you?

On this Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ said immediately واللہ انّی احبّ ان یغفر اللہ لی that is 'By God, I definitely want that Allah forgives me'. Immediately after that he restored the material help of Sayyidnā Misṭaḥ ﷺ, and said 'This help will never stop now'. (Bukhārī and Muslim)

These are the graces of ethics which were imparted to train the illustrious companions. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī has quoted on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said :

لیس الواصل بالمکافی ولکنّ الواصل الّذی اذا قطعت رحمه وصلها

'He is not the kind hearted towards relatives who only returns their favours, but the real kind hearted towards relatives is the one who maintains his relationship with them, despite they have severed the relations' (Maẓharī).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ الْغٰفِلٰتِ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Surely, those who level a false charge against the chaste, naïve and believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them there is a mighty punishment - 24:23.

On the face of it the same subject has been repeated in this verse which has already appeared in the verses of

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمٰنِينَ جَلْدَةً وَّلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ. إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

And those who accuse the chaste women (of fornication), but they do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes and do not accept their any evidence any more, and they are the sinners, [4] except those who repent afterwards and mend their ways; then, Allah is All-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. (24:4,5)

But in fact there is a big difference between the two, because at the end of verses on punishment of false accusation (24:4,5), those who repent are exempted and promised forgiveness. There is no such thing in this verse, and instead it announces the curse in this world and in the Hereafter, without any exception.

Therefore, it is obvious that this verse (24:23) is aimed at those who were involved in slandering Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, and did not repent, so much so that even after the revelation of her exoneration in the Qur'ān they adhered to their malicious accusation and kept on propagating it. It is but obvious that no Muslim could do such a thing. If a Muslim disregards a categorical Qur'ānic injunction, he cannot remain a Muslim. Hence, this reference relates to those hypocrites who did not stop their slander-mongering campaign against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها even after the exoneration was reveled in her favour. There is no doubt that they were hypocrites and disbelievers. Therefore, those who had felt remorse on their doing they were granted pardon in the two worlds by Allah's mercy, and those who did not repent are declared in this verse as cursed, both in this world and the Hereafter. Those who felt remorse were given the glad tiding of deliverance from punishment, and those who did not feel remorse were warned of severe punishment. Those who repented were given the good news in إِنَّ اللهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ, (Allah is Most forgiving Very-Merciful) and those who did not repent were warned of punishment in the next verse by saying يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ (On the Day their tongues, their hands and their legs will testify against them). (Bayān al-Qur'ān).

An important Warning

The few Muslims who got involved in the episode in connection with the slander on Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها did so at a time when verses regarding her exoneration were not revealed. After the revelation of verses of exoneration whoever makes an insinuation on her character is indeed a disbeliever and a denier of the Qur'ān, like the few groups of Shi'ities and some other individuals, who are involved in the shameful practice. There is not the slightest doubt that they are disbelievers. They are regarded disbelievers by the consensus of entire Ummah.

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُوْنَ

On the Day their tongues, their hands and their legs will testify against them of what they used to do. - 24:24.

The Day on which their own tongues, hands and feet will speak against them and will testify against their crimes, they will be punished precisely according to the crimes they had committed. It is related in Aḥādīth that on the Dooms Day those who will admit their sins will be

pardoned by Allah Ta'ālā, and He will conceal their sins from the crowd of people. If anyone will deny his sins and will claim that he did not commit them, and say that the angels did not write his record of actions correctly, then his speech will be taken away from him and his hands and feet will be asked to testify, who will speak and testify. Another verse اَلْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلٰى اَفْوَاهِهِمْ (Today We set a seal on their mouths, - 36:65) states this very point. This verse says that their mouths will be sealed, but the verse under discussion (of Sūrah An-Nūr) says that their tongues will testify. There is no contradiction in the two verses in that they will not be able to use their tongues at their discretion. In other words they will have no control on tongues to say anything wrong, as they have in this world. Instead their tongues will say only the right things against their intent and wish. It is also possible that at a certain time their mouths and tongues will be completely sealed and then the tongues are commanded to speak the truth (Only Allah knows best)

اَلْخَبِيْثٰتُ لِلْخَبِيْثِيْنَ وَالْخَبِيْثُوْنَ لِلْخَبِيْثٰتِ ۚ وَالطَّيِّبٰتُ لِلطَّيِّبِيْنَ وَالطَّيِّبُوْنَ لِلطَّيِّبٰتِ ۚ
اُولٰٓئِكَ مُبَرَّءُوْنَ مِمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ ؕ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ

> Vile women are for vile men, and vile men are for vile women. And good women are for good men and good men are for good women. Those are free from what they (the accusers) say. For them there is forgiveness and a graceful provision - 24:26.

It means that the vulgar women are suitable for vulgar men and the vulgar men are suitable for vulgar women. And pure women are worthy for pure men and pure men are worthy for pure women.

In this last verse the common principle is stated that Allah Ta'ālā has created a connection between the people of the same nature. Thus, vulgar and unchaste women are inclined towards vulgar and unchaste men and vice versa. Similarly, pure and chaste women show inclination towards pure and decent men and vice versa. Therefore, every one tries to find the spouse according to one's inclination and liking, and in a natural way one does find one to suit him or her.

In the light of this norm and principle it is now quite clear that the messengers of Allah, who are the models of purity and chastity both outwardly and inwardly in this world, are granted spouses by Allah Ta'ālā in accordance with their status. Hence, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who is

the head of all messengers, was bestowed with spouses who were befitting to his position and status in purity, chastity and ethical excellence, and Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها is more prominent among them all. Only those can have any doubt or suspicion about her who do not have faith in the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. It is mentioned about the wife of Sayyidnā Nūḥ and Sayyidnā Lūṭ علیهما السلام in the Qur'ān that they were disbelievers, but it is also established that they were not involved in any obscenity or vulgarity. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said ما بغت امرأة نبی قط Never did a wife of a messenger commit adultery'. (ذکر فی الدر المنثور). It is, therefore, corroborated that it is possible that a messenger's wife could be a disbeliever, but it is not possible that she could be vulgar and sexually immoral, because adultery is a natural detestable act in the eyes of people, whereas disbelief is not a natural detestable thing. (Bayān al-Qur'ān)

Verses 27- 29

يَآيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوْتِكُمْ حَتّٰى تَسْتَاْنِسُوْا وَتُسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰٓى اَهْلِهَا ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوْا فِيْهَآ اَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوْهَا حَتّٰى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ قِيْلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوْا فَارْجِعُوْا هُوَ اَزْكٰى لَكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۲۸﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُوْنَةٍ فِيْهَا مَتَاعٌ لَّكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُوْنَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾

O those who believe, do not enter any houses, other than your own houses unless you seek permission and greet their inmates with Salām. That is good for you, so that you may observe advice. [27] **Then, if you do not find anyone there, do not enter therein until permission is given to you. And if it is said to you, 'Go back', just go back; it is more decent for you. And Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.** [28] **There is no sin on you if you enter uninhabited houses in which you have rightful benefit. And Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal.** [29]

Commentary

The fifth injunction regarding mutual meetings and asking permission before entering anyone's home

Right from the beginning of Sūrah An-Nūr it is enjoined to curb the obscenity and immorality in the society, and to restrain this, various punishments are prescribed. Then labeling of false accusation on someone is condemned. After that such injunctions are enjoined which can check these obscenities and safeguard the chastity and continence, and also create an atmosphere to eliminate the conditions of their development. The issues and instructions regarding seeking permission before entering anyone's house (*Isti'dhān*) also fall within these injunctions. Hence, entering in anyone's house or to peep in without the permission of the owner has been prohibited. The wisdom in this instruction is that one should not cast an eye on women who are not one's *maḥram* (with whom marriage is prohibited). In the above verses various instructions are given against various types of houses.

There are four categories of houses. One, in which one lives, where there is no possibility of the presence of some stranger. Two, where someone else is also residing, irrespective of being *maḥram* or not, and where there is a possibility of someone's entry. Three, where there are both possibilities that someone is living or the house is empty. Four, a house which is not specified for anyone's living, such as, a mosque, school, monastery, shrine etc., where all people go in. Out of these four categories it is obvious that there is no need of asking permission to go in the houses of the first kind. Hence, the first category is not mentioned specifically in these verses, but for the other three categories injunctions are spelled out.

An important aspect of Qur'ānic social ethic is that if you go to meet someone, first ask the permission and do not enter in anyone's house without permission.

It is a pity that the amount of importance Islam has attached to ethics of visiting someone by providing detailed instructions about them in the Qur'ān, and which were strongly emphasized by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, both by practice and oral teachings, the present day Muslims neglect them by the same margin. Even the pious and educated people do not regard this a sin, nor do they make an effort to act on them. The other civilized nations of the world have adopted them to improve their society,

but the Muslims have lagged behind them all. This was the very first Islamic injunction which was overlooked by the Muslims to begin with. It is worth noting that seeking permission (*Isti'dhān*) is that injunction of the Holy Qur'ān in which even the slightest laxity or alteration is termed by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ as the rejection of the Qur'ān itself. As a matter of fact now people overlook these injunctions so much as if they are not part of the Holy Qur'ān. انا لِلّٰہِ وانا الیہ راجعون

Wisdom of seeking permission (*Isti'dhān*)

Allah Ta'ālā has provided every person a place where he lives, whether he owns it or has acquired it on rent. Such a place is his home, and the real purpose of a home is to provide comfort and tranquility. When the Holy Qur'ān has referred to one's home as a great blessing of Allah, it has an indication towards this basic objective of a home. The Qur'ān says, جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا (16:80) It means that Allah has given you peace and comfort through your homes. One can enjoy peace and comfort in his home only when he can live there without the interference of any one else, and can rest and work at will. Any interference in his freedom is tantamount to killing the very purpose of the home, which is naturally very damaging. Islam has prohibited harming anyone without any cause. A great wisdom in the injunction of seeking permission is to save people from interference of others and its consequent ill effects, which is obligatory on all peace loving people.

The other consideration in the injunction is for the visitor himself, in that if he would go in to meet someone after taking permission, then the host will also reciprocate his gesture by giving him due importance and respect. If his visit is with purpose then the host will be sympathetic and try to meet his need. On the other hand, if he would go in to call on someone without taking his permission, like an uncouth, then naturally he would not be so welcome, and the host would like to get rid of him as quickly as possible. Even if the host had any sympathy toward him, it would be reduced, and the sin for causing trouble to a Muslim would be additional.

The third consideration is the elimination of obscenity and immorality. If one enters someone's home without taking prior permission, the possibility is that he might see the ladies of the house, which may lead to temptations. It is for this reason that the injunctions on seeking

permission are placed next to punishment of adultery and punishment of false accusation etc.

The fourth consideration is that sometimes one is busy in the solitude of his home doing something which he does not want others to see. If someone comes into his house unannounced, then that act will be known to others, which he wanted to conceal. Any attempt to disclose the secrets of others is also a sin and a source of vexation. Some issues concerning seeking permission have been described in the above verses themselves, so they should be considered first. Other related issues will be dealt with later.

Ruling

In these verses the address is with the phrase يَاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا (O those who believe) which is used for men, (because the relative pronoun in the text الذين is originally of masculine gender) but women are also included in the injunction, like other Qur'ānic injunctions, which are normally addressed to men but women are included in them, except in some cases where it is expressly mentioned that they are exclusive for men. Therefore, wives of the Ṣaḥābah included themselves in the address of the present verse and acted accordingly. Whenever they would visit any one's house, they used to seek permission. Sayyidah Umm Iyās رضی اللہ عنہا has said 'We were four women who used to visit frequently Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا together, and used to seek permission before going in the house, and would enter only after she had permitted'. (Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim)

Ruling

It is clear from the universality of this verse that on a visit to anyone's house the injunction of seeking permission is common to all, whether men or women, Maḥram or non-Maḥram. Either a woman goes to visit another woman, or a man goes to visit another man, it is obligatory on all to seek permission. Similarly, if a man visits his mother, sisters or any other Maḥram woman, he should seek permission. Imām Mālik has narrated in Muwaṭṭa' quoting 'Aṭā' Ibn Yasār رحمہم اللہ تعالیٰ that someone enquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether he should seek permission before going to his mother. He ﷺ said 'Yes, do seek permission'. Then that fellow said 'O Messenger of Allah, ﷺ I live with my mother in the same house'. He ﷺ said even then you should not enter the house without taking

permission. He asked again "O Messenger of Allah, ﷺ ! 'I am always at her service'. He ﷺ replied, 'You should still ask her permission. Would you like that you see your mother naked? He said 'No, no'. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'It is for this reason that you should seek permission, because there is a possibility that she might have uncovered some of her coverable parts in the house for some need'. (Maẓharī)

One learns from this Ḥadīth that the word "other than your own houses" in the phrase غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ, (24:27) as it appears in the Qur'ān, refers to those houses where one lives alone and no one else, like parents, brothers or sisters reside with him. (It is only in this case that seeking permission is not necessary).

Ruling

If someone is living alone in the house with his wife, even then it is preferable and a *sunnah* to make some sort of sound, such as hem or thump, before entering, in order to make known his incoming, although seeking permission is not obligatory in this case. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's wife ﵂ has reported that whenever 'Abdullāh would come in the house, he would always make a hemming sound at the door to announce his arrival before entering, so that he should not see us in a condition that he would like to avoid. (Ibn Kathīr quoting Ibn Jarīr with an authentic chain). In another situation Ibn Juraij inquired from 'Aṭā' رحمه الله تعالى whether it is obligatory to seek permission before going in one's own house to his wife, and he said 'no'. Ibn Kathīr after quoting this version has explained that what it means is that it is not obligatory but preferable.

The Traditional way of seeking permission

The procedure for seeking permission, as explained in the verse is حَتّٰى تَسْتَأْنِسُوْا وَتُسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰٓى اَهْلِهَا, (24:27) that is do not enter into any one's house until carrying out two things. First, *Isti'nās* – its literal meaning is to seek acquaintance. Majority of commentators have taken this word for *isti'dhān*, that is to take permission. By the use of word *Isti'nās* instead of *isti'dhān* there is a hint that in taking permission before entering, the host gets acquainted with the visitor through his voice and the element of surprise is removed. The second requirement is greeting the inmates of the house with *salām*. Some commentators have elaborated it as; one should first seek permission and on entering the house should greet the

inmates. Qurṭubī has also adopted this explanation that one should first seek permission, and when it is granted, only then go in and greet the hosts. Sayyidnā Abū Ayyub Anṣāri's Ḥadīth also corresponds well with this explanation, to which Māwardī has added further that if the visitor happens to see an inmate of the house before seeking permission, then he should first greet him, and then seek permission to go in, otherwise one should first seek permission and then greet on entering. But the procedure that seems to be *masnun* through narrations of Ḥadīth, is that one should first greet from outside with *Assalamu 'Alaikum* (السّلام عليكم) and then by announcing his name should seek permission to go in.

Imām Bukhārī in his al-Adab ul-Mufrad has quoted on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Huraira ﷺ that if someone seeks permission before greeting, the host need not reply (because he has deviated from the practice adopted by the Holy Prophet ﷺ) (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī) Abū Dāwūd has narrated in his Ḥadīth that someone from Banī 'Āmir sought permission from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, saying أَأَلِجُ (that is, can I thrust in?). On hearing that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to his servant, "this man does not know how to seek permission. Go to him and explain to him that the permission should be sought by saying السّلام عليكم أ أدخل (that is, Assalāmu 'Alaikum, can I come in?). Before the servant could go out that fellow himself said 'Assalāmu 'Alaikum' السّلام عليكم أ أدخل as he had heard the instruction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . Then he ﷺ permitted him to come in. (Ibn Kathīr)

Baihaqi has narrated in Shu'ab-ul-'Īmān on the authority of Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said لاتأذنوا لمن لَمْ يَبدأ بالسلام that is 'Do not let in the one who does not greet before seeking permission'. (Maẓharī). In this case the Holy Prophet ﷺ has made two corrections. One, that one should greet first. Two, that he had used the word أَدْخُلُ instead of أَلِجُ, which was not proper, because the word is derived from *wulūj* (وُلُوْج) which means, to make an entry with force into a narrow space. This expression is against all ethics. In any case, one learns from these narrations that the instruction of greetings given in the Qur'ānic verses relate to the greeting for seeking permission, which is offered from outside the house for inviting the attention of the inmates. On entering the house, the greetings should be repeated in the usual manner.

Ruling

The procedure of greeting first and then seeking permission for entry, as has been established by various Aḥādīth, can best be followed if the visitor himself announces his name for seeking permission. This was exactly the practice of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. He used to announce at the door of the Holy Prophet ﷺ السّلام على رسول الله، السلام عليكم أيدخل عمر؟ that is, after the greetings whether Umar can come in. (Ibn Kathīr etc.) Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim has narrated that Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ﷺ went to see Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ and sought permission to get in by saying السلام عليكم هذا ابو موسٰى، السلام عليكم هذا الاشعرى (Qurṭubī). First he gave his name as Abū Mūsā and then for further clarification added Ash'arī. This is to help the host recognize the caller immediately and respond quickly, for without recognizing the visitor the host may hesitate to give permission for getting in.

Ruling

Some people adopt the worst possible practice in this regard that they ask permission from outside to come in without disclosing their identity. And when the host inquires as to who was there, they would answer 'It is me'. This is not the right answer to the host. If he has not recognized the voice on the first call, how can he recognize with the answer – 'it is me'.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi has reported in his Jāmi' quoting 'Alī Ibn 'Āṣim al-Wāsitī that when he went to Baṣrah he went to see Sayyidnā Mughira Ibn Shu'bah ﷺ, and knocked at his door. Sayyidnā Mughīrah ﷺ inquired from inside as to who was there. He answered *Ana* (أنا) that is 'It is me'. So, Sayyidnā Mughīrah ﷺ said ' I do not have anyone among my friends by the name *Ana*' (أنا). Then he went out and related the Ḥadīth to him that one day Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh ﷺ went to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ and knocked at his door. The Holy Prophet ﷺ inquired from inside as to who was there, and Jābir ﷺ said *Ana* (أنا) that is 'It is me'. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeated the words '*Ana Ana*' (أنا، أنا) to explain that there is no point in saying *Ana, Ana,* as no one can be recognized by this word.

Ruling

There is yet another very wrong practice which is commonly observed these days even by the educated people, and that is they would knock at the door and when the inmates would enquire from inside as to who was

there, they do not reply at all and remain silent. This is the worst practice to tease the host, as he remains in suspense about the identity of the visitor, and the very spirit of seeking permission is defeated.

Ruling

This has also been established by these narrations that it is also a correct procedure of seeking permission to knock at the door, provided one tells his name at the same time.

Ruling

If one knocks at the door, it should not be so strong that the inmates get upset, rather it should be mild with the sole purpose of letting the inmates know that some one is at the door. Those who used to knock at the door of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they used to knock with their nails in a manner that the sound should not be loud enough to disturb him. (As narrated by Al-Khaṭīb in his Jāmi' – Qurṭubī) If one understands the spirit behind *isti'dhān* that it is meant to seek permission with familiarization (*isti'nās*) of the caller, then automatically he would take care of all those things which could possibly trouble the host. What is required is to knock gently and announce the name for familiarization.

Important Warning

These days people do not pay any attention toward seeking permission, which is a clear sin for forsaking an obligation. But on the other hand there are some problems in our time for those who do want to take permission in the prescribed manner, that is first offer greetings from outside and then seek permission by announcing their name. One problem is that the host to whom they want their voice to reach is not available close to the door, hence it is difficult to convey to him the sound of greetings and the name of the caller. Therefore, the important thing to note is that the spirit of the injunction is not to enter anyone's house without permission. There may be different forms of seeking permission in different places in different times. One such form is to knock at the door, which is established by the record of Ḥadīth. In the present time people fix up bells at their doors. It is sufficient for carrying out the obligation of seeking permission to press the button of the bell, provided the caller also announces his name after that in an audible voice for the host. Apart from this, it is also in order to adopt any other method of seeking permission in vogue at any place. The present day system of sending in

visiting cards to disclose the identity of the caller is a good practice in that not only the name of the caller but also his address is made known to the host without any effort on his part, which fulfils the spirit behind *isti'dhān*. Therefore, there is no harm in adopting this system.

Ruling

If a person asks permission from someone and he replies in the negative that he cannot meet at that time, then the caller should go back and not feel offended. He should realize that every one's needs and circumstances are different, and at times it is beyond the control of persons to call in the visitor or to go out and meet him. Hence, his refusal to meet should be accepted with good grace. In the present verse the same thing is emphasized وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ that is, 'If it is said to you, "Go back" just go back, it is more decent for you - 24:28. Some people of the past ages are reported to have said 'I waited all my life wishing that I visit someone and seek permission to go in the house, and the host turns down my request asking me to go back so that I could be rewarded the grace of this Qur'ānic injunction by following it. But, alas, I could never get that blessing'.

Ruling

The Islamic jurisprudence has established a two-sided system of teaching the mannerism of social graces and of saving all from the troubles and inconvenience. The way visitors are advised in this verse that if their request for permission to go in is turned down, they should not feel offended, similarly, the other side of the coin is taught in a Ḥadīth. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said ان لزورک علیک حقا. (Surely your visitors have some rights to be observed by you). It means that one who comes to meet you he too has his right on you. His right is that you should call him in, pay him respect and listen to him. Do not refuse to meet him without any serious excuse or a genuine reason.'

Ruling

If one goes to meet someone and seeks permission to go in, but does not get an answer, then according to practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he should knock a second time, and still if there is no answer then he should knock a third time. If he does not get an answer the third time, then the injunction is, that he should go back. After knocking three times it becomes obvious that the inmate must have heard the knock, but

presumably he is in a condition that he cannot answer, for instance, praying or in the toilet or taking shower. Alternatively, he does not want to meet at that time. In both the situations it is not advisable to keep on staying there or keep on knocking, as it will upset the host, which must be avoided. The real purpose of *isti'dhān* is to avoid any inconvenience to the host.

Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā Ash'arī ﵁ has narrated that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that اذا استأذن احدكم ثلاثاً فلم يؤذن له فليرجع that is, 'when someone seeks permission three times and does not get reply, he should go back' (Ibn Kathīr quoting Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī). And Masnad Aḥmad has reported on authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﵁ that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ had gone to meet Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah ﵁, and said *Assalāmu 'Alaikum* (السلام عليكم) from outside to seek permission (*Isti'dhān*) to go in, according to his practice. Sayyidnā Sa'd ﵁ did reply the greeting but in a soft tone, so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ does not hear. He ﷺ repeated the greeting a second time and then a third time. On each occasion Sayyidnā Sa'd ﵁ listened the greeting and replied in a soft tone. After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went back. When Sayyidnā Sa'd ﵁ realized that, he ran after him and explained that he heard his voice every time and also replied but in a soft tone, so that the greeting words are spoken for him repeatedly by the blessed tongue, as they will bring good fortune to him. (the Holy Prophet ﷺ explained to him the way of *sunnah* that when there is no response from inside, the visitor should go back) After that Sayyidnā Sa'd ﵁ took the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with him to his house where he treated him with some refreshments, which the Holy Prophet ﷺ accepted graciously.

This action of Sayyidnā Sa'd ﵁ was the result of overwhelming love and affection for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and at that moment he did not realize that the most exalted Messenger was waiting at his door and he should immediately go out and receive him with due respect. Instead, his mind was induced toward the thought that it would be of benefit to him if the blessed tongue would utter Assalāmu 'Alaikum repeatedly. In any case this incident has established the issue that if there is no answer after seeking permission thrice, then according to practice of the Prophet ﷺ, the visitor should go back. It is against the sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to keep on waiting there, which will be a cause of trouble for the inmate and tantamount to forcing the host to come out.

Ruling

The foregoing ruling relates to the situation when one has sought permission thrice by knocking and greetings. In that situation to keep on waiting there would cause trouble to the host. But if someone waits at the door of a scholar or a pious person without seeking permission or without informing him, in the hope that he would meet him when he would come out according to his convenience, such a waiting is not undesirable, rather it is a great respect shown by the caller. The Qur'ān itself has advised people that to call the Holy Prophet ﷺ while he is inside, with the purpose of calling him out of the house is disrespect to him. People should wait for him outside until he comes out on his own according to his convenience. The related verse says وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ (And if they had patience until you come out to them, that would be better for them - 49:5). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has said, 'Sometimes I keep on waiting the whole afternoon at the door of an Anṣārī companion until he would come out on his own, for asking about some *Aḥadīth* . Had I sought permission to go in, he would have definitely allowed me, but I regarded that against ethics. That is why I used to bear the trouble of waiting'. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī).

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَّكُمْ

There is no sin on you if you enter uninhabited houses in which you have rightful benefit - 24:29.

Literal meaning of the word مَتَاع Matā' is to use, put to use, and to benefit from something. Anything from which some benefit is drawn is also called Matā'. In this verse Matā' is used in its literal meaning and is translated as 'rightful benefit'. It is reported by Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه that when verses regarding *isti'dhān* (seeking permission) were revealed, he inquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ "Ya Rasūl Allah! What would the traders of Quraish do after this prohibition? They travel with trading caravans from Makkah and Madīnah to Syria and have a number of resting places spread out all along the route, where they stay while traveling. There are no permanent inmates in those places. So, what will be the form of *isti'dhān* at those places? Whom will they seek the permission from?' On this enquiry the above verse was revealed (Maẓharī on authority of Ibn Abi Ḥātim).

The background of revelation of this verse tells us that the phrase بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ (uninhabited houses) relates to those houses and places which are not specifically meant for the residence of any individual or community. Rather they are open to all to go in and stay or use, such as public inns, which are made for the purpose of free stay of the travelers, mosques, shrines, schools, hospitals, post offices, railway stations, airports and community centers. Thus, all places built for the common welfare of people fall under this category, where every one is allowed to go in and use.

Ruling

In all the welfare centers where there are some restrictions or conditions placed by the owners or by the organizers for entry, their observance is obligatory by religious law also. For instance, if it is necessary for entering a railway platform to purchase the ticket, it will not be permissible in Sharī'ah to enter it without the ticket. The ticket is compulsory. Similarly, going into the restricted area of an airport is not allowed without having the necessary permission.

Ruling

However, if the specific rooms are reserved in mosques, shrines, schools, hospitals etc. for their staff, such as closets in mosques, shrines and schools or the offices in the hospitals, railway stations and airports, they do not fall under the category of 'uninhabited houses'. In all such places entry without permission is prohibited by Shariah.

Some other issues related to Isti'dhan

When we have learnt that the basic purpose of the Sharī'ah injunction of Isti'dhān is to avoid giving any trouble to others, and teaching of ethics of social graces, on the same principle the following code of conducts can also be drawn.

Some Issues relating to Telephone

To ring up anyone at a time which is normally his resting time or the time for prayers, unless extremely urgent, is not justified, for the same reason that it will be troublesome for him, just like entering anyone's house without permission, which disturbs the freedom of the host.

Ruling

If one has to talk to someone frequently, then it is desirable that it should be enquired from him the convenient time when he can talk without any trouble, and then only at that time he should be contacted on telephone.

Ruling

If one has to discuss something in detail with someone on telephone, then it is advisable that he should first find out from him whether he can talk in detail for some length of time. It is a common happening that when one is busy, the telephone bell rings, and he is compelled to lift the receiver no matter what he was doing, and if the caller talks for long, it really hurts the listener.

Ruling

Some people do not care about the ringing of telephone. It keeps on ringing but they would not lift the receiver. This habit is also against the Islamic ethics, and tantamount to usurpation of the right of the caller. As the Ḥadīth says ان لزورك عليك حقًا (Your guests have some rights obligated on you). It indicates that the one who has come to meet you, it is his right that you talk to him, and do not refuse meeting him without reason, similarly, the one who wants to talk to you on telephone, it is his right that you respond.

Ruling

If you have gone to someone's house to meet him, and are waiting for the permission, in that situation you must not peep in, because the purpose of Isti'dhān is that you should not know what the host wants to hide from you. If you see it by peeping inside, then that purpose is lost. It is strongly prohibited in the *ḥadīth* (Bukhārī and Muslim quoting Sahal Ibn Sa'd as-Sa'idī). It was the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that if he would go to meet someone and wait for the permission to go in, he would stand by the side of the door and not in front of it. He used to make Isti'dhān by the side of the door, because very seldom there were curtains on the door during that time, and if they were, there was the possibility of their opening up with the wind. (Maẓharī)

Ruling

The prohibition to go in the houses mentioned in the above verse is meant under normal conditions. But if there is an emergency, like fire or

demolition of the house, then one can enter without taking permission, rather it is desirable to go in immediately.

Ruling

If a person has sent someone to call another person, and he comes along with the person who had gone to fetch him, then he need not take permission to go in. The messenger who had gone to fetch him is permission by itself. But if he does not turn up along with the messenger, but goes later, then seeking of permission will be required. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said اذا دعی أحدکم فجاء مع الرسول فان ذلک له اذن 'If someone is called and he comes along with the messenger, then this by itself is permission for going in'. (Abū Dāwūd – Maẓharī)

Verses 30 - 31

قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم ويحفظوا فروجهم ط ذلك
ازكى لهم ط ان الله خبير بما يصنعون ﴿٣٠﴾ وقل للمؤمنت
يغضضن من ابصارهن ويحفظن فروجهن ولا يبدين زينتهن الا
ما ظهر منها وليضربن بخمرهن على جيوبهن ص ولا يبدين
زينتهن الا لبعولتهن اوابآئهن اواباء بعولتهن او ابنآئهن اوابناء
بعولتهن او اخوانهن اوبني اخوانهن اوبني اخوتهن اونسآئهن
اوما ملكت ايمانهن اوالتبعين غير اولى الاربة من الرجال
اوالطفل الذين لم يظهروا على عورت النسآء ص ولا يضربن
بارجلهن ليعلم ما يخفين من زينتهن ط وتوبوا الى الله جميعا ايه
المؤمنون لعلكم تفلحون ﴿٣١﴾

Say to the believing men that they must lower their gazes and guard their private parts; it is more decent for them. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what they do. [30] **And say to the believing women that they must lower their gazes and guard their private parts, and must not expose their adornment, except that which**

appears thereof, and must wrap their bosoms with their shawls, and must not expose their adornment except to their husbands or their fathers or the fathers of their husbands, or to their sons or the sons of their husbands, or to their brothers or the sons of their brothers or the sons of their sisters, or to their women, or to those owned by their right hands, or male attendants having no (sexual) urge, or to the children who are not yet conscious of the shames of women. And let them not stamp their feet in a way that the adornment they conceal is known. And repent to Allah O believers, all of you, so that you may achieve success. [31]

Commentary

An important chapter for the prevention of obscenity and security of chastity: *Ḥijāb* for women

The very first verses on the subject of *ḥijāb* for women are the ones which were revealed in Sūrah Aḥzāb at the time of marriage of the mother of the believers Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥash رضی الله عنها with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Some have given the date of revelation of these verses as 3rd Hijra while others say it was 5th Hijra. Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr and Nail Al-Auṭār have given preference to the latter date, while Rūḥ ul-M'āni has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ؓ that this marriage was solemnized in Dhulqa'dah 5th Hijra. But it is an agreed position that the first verse on Ḥijāb was revealed on this occasion. As for the above referred verses of Sūrah an-Nūr, they were revealed at the time of incident of *Ifk,* which had happened on return from the battle of Banī Mustaliq or Muraisī'. This battle had taken place in the 6th Hijra. Hence, it is clear from the revelation point of view that Sūrah An-Nūr's verses on *ḥijāb* were revealed later, and Sūrah Aḥzāb's four verses were revealed earlier, and that the practice on the injunction of *ḥijāb* had started when the verses of Sūrah Aḥzāb were revealed. The subject of *ḥijāb* will be discussed Inshallah in detail under Sūrah Aḥzāb. Here the explanation will be restricted to only those verses which appear in Sūrah an-Nūr.

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَهُمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ اَزْكٰى لَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ

Say to the believing men that they must lower their gazes and

guard their private parts; it is more decent for them. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what they do. (24:30)

The word يَغُضُّ (*yaghuḍḍu*) is derived from غضّ (*ghaḍḍ*), which means to bring down or to lower, (Rāghib) lowering of eyes or to keep eyes down as enjoined in the verse, means to turn the eyes from something which is prohibited to be seen by Sharī'ah (Ibn Kathīr). Ibn Ḥibbān has given the explanation that to look at a non–Maḥram woman with intent to have (sexual) pleasure is totally prohibited, and to look without any such motive is *makrūh* (undesirable). To look at any woman's or man's private parts of the body is included in this explanation (except in case of dire necessity, such as medical examination). Peeping into anyone's house with the intent of finding out his secrets, and all such acts where looking is prohibited by Sharī'ah are all included in the injunction.

وَيَحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَهُمْ (24:30) Protection of private parts is purported to express that all possible situations of satisfying unlawful sexual desires be guarded against. In this, adultery, sodomy, lesbian act, masturbation and all such acts that fulfill unlawful lust and passions are prohibited. The purpose of the verse is to prohibit all illicit acts for fulfilling unlawful passions. For this purpose the initial and the ultimate acts have been mentioned rather clearly, and all those actions which fall in between them are also included in the prohibition. For unlawful sexual passion the very first act is casting eye with bad motive and its ultimate result is adultery. Both these acts have been mentioned clearly and are prohibited. All other acts falling in between, such as touching hands or having conversation, are included by implication.

Ibn Kathīr has related Sayyidnā 'Ubaidah ﷺ having said كلّ ما عصى الله به فهو كبيرة وقد ذكر الطرفين that is 'Any act done in disobedience to Allah is a major sin, but the initial and ultimate acts are mentioned at the two ends of the verse'. The initial act is to cast eye, and the ultimate is adultery. Ṭabarānī has quoted Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said :

النظر سهم من سهام ابليس مسموم من تركها مخافتى ابدلته ايمانا يجد حلاوته في قلبه. (از ابن كثير)

'Casting eye is a poisonous arrow among the arrows of Satan. Whoever turns away his eye fearing from Me (despite demand of the heart), I will give him such strong faith, the delight of

which he will feel in his heart'. (Ibn Kathīr)

It is reported in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullāh al-Bajali ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised what should one do if by chance one's eye is cast on a non-Maḥram woman. He has quoted the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying 'Turn away your eyes from there'. (Ibn Kathīr). Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ has said that first sight is forgivable, but casting eye a second time is sin. Both versions are alike, that is, if one casts his eye by chance without intention, it is forgiven being not intentional, otherwise it is prohibited to cast the eye intentionally, even the first time.

To stare intentionally at boys having no beard also falls within this ruling

Ibn Kathīr has reported that many elders of the Ummah used to forbid forcefully staring at young boys (having no beard), and many scholars have declared it as forbidden (Perhaps it is in a situation when one looks with bad intention and passionate desire. God knows best)

Looking at non-Maḥram is forbidden

وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنٰتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِنَّ

And say to the believing women that they must lower their gazes - 24:31.

In the initial part of this long verse the injunction is the same which has been enjoined on men-folk in the preceding verse, that is, keep the eyes down or turn away the eyes. Women-folk are also included in the injunction along with men, but in the next verse there is a separate injunction for them for laying more emphasis. Hence, it is clear that for women it is forbidden to look at any man except their *maḥrams*. Many scholars have declared that it is absolutely forbidden for women to see non-Maḥram men, irrespective of looking with bad intent and passion or without any intent and passion; in either case it is forbidden. For this ruling the argument put forward in support is the *ḥadīth* of Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا, which relates that once 'Umm Salamah and Maimūnah رضی اللہ عنہما both were with the Holy Prophet ﷺ when suddenly 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umm Maktūm, the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was blind, came in, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked them to go inside. This incident had happened after the injunction of *ḥijāb* for

women was revealed. On this 'Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها - pleaded 'O Holy Prophet! But he is only blind, he can't see us'. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied 'Is it that you are blind too?' (Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī - Tirmidhi declared this *ḥadīth* as hasan Ṣaḥīḥ). Other jurists have ruled that there is no harm if women look at strange males without any passion. They base their argument on the *ḥadīth* of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, in which it is related that on an Eid day some African youths were showing their military exercises in the courtyard of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was watching this game, and so was Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, under the cover of the back of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. She kept on watching the game until she herself got tired of it, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not object to her watching. Scholars are all unanimous on the point that looking with lust is prohibited, but looking without lust is also not a preferred act.

To look at a woman's *satr* (concealable) parts by another woman without any lawful reason is also prohibited in line with the wordings of this verse. It is for the reason that concealing of *satr* (concealable) from all, both by men and women, is obligatory by Shariah. Man's *satr* (concealable) comprises all parts of the body from navel to knees, and that of women, the whole body, except face and palms. Neither can a man see another man's *satr* nor can a woman see another woman's *satr*. Looking by a man at a woman's *satr* or of a woman at a man's *satr* is highly prohibited, and amounts to contradiction of the injunction of the Qur'ānic verse which enjoins for 'turning away the eyes'. As has been explained above in detail, it is enjoined in the verse to lower the eyes or to turn the eyes away from everything which is prohibited to be seen under Islamic injunctions. To look at a woman's *satr* by another woman is included in that.

وَلَا يُبْدِيْنَ زِيْنَتَهُنَّ اِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلٰى جُيُوْبِهِنَّ ص وَلَا يُبْدِيْنَ زِيْنَتَهُنَّ اِلَّا لِبُعُوْلَتِهِنَّ

And must not expose their adornment, except that which appears thereof, and must wrap their bosoms with their shawls, and must not expose their adornment except to their husbands - 24:31.

The literal meaning of *zīnah* (زِيْنَة) is that with which a woman adorns herself to appear attractive. It may be nice clothes or ornaments. There is

an agreement of the scholars on the point that when the clothes and ornaments are not worn by women, and are only displayed in the market place, then they are allowed to be seen by men-folk. For this reason majority of scholars have taken the meaning of *zīnah* as those parts of the body where the objects of *zīnah* are worn. Hence, the meaning of the verse is that it is obligatory for women not to show the parts of the body where the objects of adornments are worn. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). Whereas it is prohibited for women in this verse to show their *zīnah*, two exceptions have, however, been made. One is for that to be seen, and the other for those who see.

Exception from the injunction of *ḥijāb*

First exception is that of مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا (except that which appears thereof). It means that 'Women are not permitted to show their *zīnah* to men, except that which is revealed on its own'. The indication is that while women are working, some parts of the body get uncovered automatically, and their covering is difficult, hence, exception of such parts is permitted. There is no sin in their uncovering. (Ibn Kathīr). Which parts do really fall under this exception? On this subject Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ and 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ have given different explanations. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ has explained that what has been excepted in مَاظَهَرَمِنْهَا is the outer covering, such as veil or the sheet used for *ḥijāb*. These over-clothings are used to cover up the normal garments of *zīnah*. Hence, the meaning of the verse would be that it is not permitted to show anything from the *zīnah* (garments), except the over-clothings like veil, whose hiding is not possible when going out for some work. On the other hand Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has interpreted that it is purported for face and palms, because when a woman is forced to go out because of necessity, it is difficult to hide face and palms while engaged in her work. Therefore, according to the explanation of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ it is not permitted for women even to uncover – their faces and palms before non-Maḥram men. Only the over-clothings, like veil etc. are excepted under necessity. But in accordance with the explanation of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ it is permitted to uncover the face and palms before the non-Maḥrams. Thus, there is a difference of opinion among the religious scholars on the issue whether it is permissible to uncover the face and palms before non-Maḥrams or not. But all agree on

that if there is a risk of *fitnah* (i.e. stimulation of illicit desires) by looking at feminine face and palms, then its uncovering is not allowed, and women are not permitted to uncover their faces and palms in that situation. All scholars also agree on that in prayers women can uncover their faces and palms and in the uncovered position their prayers will be considered valid.

Qāḍī Baiḍāwī and Khāzin have said in the explanation of this verse that the object of the verse appears to be that women should not let anything of their *zīnah* be seen, except that which gets uncovered during the process of working. In this definition the veil and sheet, as well as face and palms are all included, because when a woman goes out for some necessary work, veil and sheet are open to be seen in any case, but sometimes face and palms also get uncovered during the movements of work. Hence, their uncovering is allowed and is not regarded a sin. But it does not mean that men are allowed to see faces and palms of women unnecessarily. Instead, it is enjoined upon men to keep their eyes lower, and if a woman is constrained to uncover her face or palms, the men should turn their eyes away, unless required to see in the performance of some lawful act. In this explanation both the traditions and interpretations are reconciled. Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى has also ruled that it is not allowed to see the face and palms of a non-Maḥram woman without a lawful need. Ibn Ḥajar Makki Shafi'ī has quoted in his *zawājir* that Imām Shafi'ī's view is also the same that although women's face and palms are not part of their *satr*, and they are allowed to pray while these parts are uncovered, yet non-Maḥrams are not allowed to see them without a lawful need. However, this has already been stated above that even those scholars who have ruled it permissible to see women's face and palms, also agree that if there is a risk of mischief, then looking at their faces is not permissible. It is well known that the center of beauty and attraction is the face of a person, and the present age is full of temptation, mischief and lasciviousness, and people are lost in remissness. Therefore, in the present circumstances it is impermissible to uncover the face before the non-Maḥram men, except for medical treatment or in emergency. Similarly, it is not allowed for the men-folk as well to look at women intentionally, unless it is required by a genuine need.

After granting exception to the opened Zinah, it is enjoined in the

verse under reference وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلٰى جُيُوْبِهِنَّ, (24:31) that is, 'must wrap their bosoms with their shawls'. (خُمُر) Khomor is the plural of (خِمَار) Khimār. It is the piece of cloth which women use to cover their head, and it also covers up the neck and bosom. جُيُوْب (*juyūb*) is the plural of جَيْب, (*jayb*) which means upper part of the shirt just below the neck. Since the time immemorial this part of the garment is placed over the chest of a person, hence the covering of *juyūb* means covering of the chest or bosom. In the beginning of the verse showing of *zīnah* was prohibited, while in this sentence hiding of *zīnah* is emphasized and a specific situation is also described, the purpose of which is to eliminate an old custom of pre-Islamic days. In the pre-Islamic time women used to place the sheet on their head and let its two sides hang on their back, with the result that their neck, ears and bosom were left uncovered. Therefore, Muslim women were enjoined not to follow this, and instead were advised to place the two sides of the sheet one over the other, so that all these parts are covered. (Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Ibn Jubair – Rūḥ)

The second exception in the verse relates to the men before whom no *hijab* is to be observed by women. There are two reasons for this exception. First, those men who are exempt from this injunction are the *maḥrams*, hence, no risk of any trouble is expected from them. Allah Ta'ālā has put in their hearts deep respect and honour of their close female relatives, hence, there is no possibility of any mischief from them. Secondly, since the close relatives normally live all together, for the sake of convenience it is required that they do not hide from each other. But this should also be kept in mind that this exception from hiding from *maḥrams* is exclusive to *ḥijāb*, and not from the *satr* of women, where the exception is allowed only to husbands. Those parts of the body of women which are included in *satr*, and which are not allowed to be uncovered in the prayers, are not permitted to be seen by any *maḥram*.

Eight types of *maḥram* men and four other types with whom no *ḥijāb* is necessary are listed in this verse. In another verse of Sūrah Aḥzāb, which was revealed before this verse, only seven types of *maḥram* are mentioned. Hence, five more types were added in the above referred verse of Sūrah an-Nūr, which is a later revelation.

Warning

It should be noted that the word *maḥram* is used here in its general

sense, which includes husband also. In the connotation used by the scholars for this word it means the person with whom marriage is not allowed. That meaning of the word is not intended here. Let us now take up the details of the twelve exceptions mentioned in the verse under consideration: The first exception is that of husband with whom hiding of any part of the wife's body is not required. But, looking at the private parts of wife without need is not a preferable act. Sayyidah 'Āishah رضی اللہ عنہا has said مَا رأى منّى ولارأيت منه 'Neither he saw my private parts nor did I see his'.

Second, exception is of fathers, in which category apart from father, grandfather, great grandfather are all included. Third, is the father-in-law, and husband's grandfather and great grandfather. Fourth, are the sons. Fifth, are the husband's sons, who may be from his other wives. Sixth, are the brothers, in which category all step-brothers whether from real-mother or from real-father are included. But cousin brothers are not part of this category. They are all non-Maḥrams. Seventh, are the sons of brothers. Here also sons of step-brothers are included, but sons of cousins are not included. Eighth, are the sons of sisters, and here again sons of step-sisters are included but not those of the cousins. These are the eight categories of *maḥrams*.

Ninth category

أَوْنِسَآئِهِنَّ (31) (or to their women). These words are used for Muslim women, before whom all such parts can be uncovered which are allowed to be uncovered before father or sons. It has already been clarified earlier that this exception relates to *ḥijāb* alone and not the *satr*. It is for the simple reason that, what is not allowed to be uncovered before *maḥram* men is also not permitted to be uncovered before any Muslim woman, except for medical treatment or under dire need.

By the exception made only for Muslim women it becomes obvious that it is necessary for Muslim women to cover themselves before non-Muslim women as well. Non-Muslim women are thus in the same category as that of non-Maḥram men. Ibn Kathīr has quoted the explanation given by Mujāhid رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ for this verse that it is not permissible for a Muslim woman to uncover herself before non-Muslim women. But there are Ṣaḥīḥ *aḥadīth* available which prove that non-Muslim women used to visit wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, hence,

there is a difference of opinion among the jurists on the subject. Some have declared non-Muslim women like men for the application of this injunction, while others have placed both Muslim and non-Muslim women under one category - that is covering before them is not necessary. Imām Rāzi رحمه الله تعالى has opined that the word نِسَآئِهِنَّ (their women) encompasses both Muslim and non-Muslim women, and the practice of virtuous elders of making Muslim women covered before non-Muslim women was because it was desirable (but not obligatory). Mufti of Baghdad, 'Allāmah 'Ālūsī رحمه الله تعالى has adopted this explanation in the Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī, and has remarked هٰذا القول اوفق بالنّاس اليوم فانّه لايكاد يمكن احتجاب المسلمات عن الذميات (روح المعانى) This explanation is more suited to present time because it has become almost impossible for Muslim women to cover themselves before non-Muslim women. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Tenth category

اَوْمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُنَّ (24:31). (or to those owned by their right hands). The general sense of the wording includes both male and female slaves and servants, but many a scholars and jurists consider that it applies only to female slaves, and not to the male slaves. Therefore, it is obligatory to be in cover before them, like other non-Maḥrams. Sa'īd Ibn al-Mussayab رحمه الله تعالى has said expressing his final view 'Do not be under the misconception that the wordings اَوْمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُنَّ are general, and include male slaves as well. It is not so. This verse refers to only female slaves, male slaves are not included in it'. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Sīrīn رحمهم الله تعالى have said that it is not permissible for a male slave to see his female owner's hair (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). Now the question is that if by the wordings اَوْمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُنَّ only female slaves were meant, then they were already included in the word نِسَآئِهِنَّ (or to their women). What was the point in describing them separately? Jaṣṣāṣ رحمه الله تعالى has answered this question by explaining that the word نِسَآئِهِنَّ in its apparent sense is meant for Muslim women only, and in case there are non-Muslims also among the female slaves, they need to be separated from the rest, hence the use of this word.

Eleventh category

اَوِالتّٰبِعِيْنَ غَيْرِ اُولِى الْاِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ (or male attendants having no {sexual} urge). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has explained that, here those confused and deranged type of persons are meant who have no liking and inclination

toward women (Ibn Kathīr). The same explanation has been put forward by Ibn Jarīr quoting Abu 'Abdullāh, Ibn Jubair, Ibn 'Aṭiyyah رحمهم الله تعالی etc. Therefore, those men are referred to here who do not have any lust or inclination towards women, nor are they interested in the beauty and charm of women, which they could describe before others. As against this, eunuchs do take interest in women's special attributes; hence women should keep covered before them. There is a *ḥadīth* of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها on the subject, that an eunuch used to visit the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and they regarded him to be included in the category of غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ, (31) hence they allowed him to come in their homes. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw him and listened his conversation, he stopped him from coming inside the homes. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

For this very reason Ibn Ḥajar Makkī رحمه الله تعالی has commented in Sharaḥ al-Minhāj that no matter a man be impotent or devoid of genital organs or be very old, he is not included in the expression غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ, and women are required to cover themselves before all of them. However, addition of the word اَلتَّابِعِيْنَ with the expression غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ is meant to indicate those who are confused and deranged, and enter the houses with the purpose of eating and drinking as an attendant of some guests. Such men are excluded and it is not necessary to observe *ḥijāb* before them. They have been mentioned here because in fact there were some such men at that time, and they used to go inside the homes, only with the intention of eating and drinking, but the real cause of their being excepted from the rules of *ḥijāb* is their being of unsound mind and having no sexual urge and not being attendants of someone

Twelfth category

أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِيْنَ (or to the children who are not yet conscious of the shames of women - 31). This refers to those young children who have not yet attained puberty, and are totally ignorant of ladies special attributes, gestures and postures. Any boy who takes interest in ladies company for their special attributes is nearing his puberty, and covering before him becomes obligatory.(Ibn Kathīr). Imām Jaṣṣāṣ رحمه الله تعالی has explained that the word *Ṭifl* (children) refers here to those children who do not differentiate between men and women in special attributes. (Jaṣṣāṣ has narrated this from Mujāhid).

وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِيْنَ مِنْ زِيْنَتِهِنَّ

And let them not stamp their feet in a way that the adornment they conceal is known - 24:31.

It is incumbent upon women to step so gently that no sound is made of their ornaments and none of their *zīnah* is exposed to men.

To cause hearing of jewellery's sound to non-Maḥrams is prohibited

In the beginning of the verse it was prohibited for women to show their *zīnah* (ornaments or garments) to non-Maḥram men. At the end of it, it is reemphasized that covering of head and bosom etc. was in any way obligatory as part of hiding of *zīnah*, rather any exposure of hidden *zīnah* by any means is also prohibited. Putting in something in the ornaments so that they produce sound, or making of sound by the touch of ornaments with each other, or putting the feet on the ground in such a manner that ornaments make sound, and the non-Maḥrams listen to these sounds; they are all prohibited under the provision of this verse. In the light of this explanation many jurists have drawn the conclusion that when causing to hear the ornament's sound is prohibited, then to cause hearing of women's own voice would be prohibited even more strongly. Therefore, they have ruled that the voice of women is also included in their *satr*. For this reason it is declared in *Nawāzil* that women should learn Qur'ān from women only, as far as possible. Learning of Qur'ān from men should be as a last resort only.

Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim have quoted a *ḥadīth* which says that while offering prayers if someone passes in front, he should be warned with a loud voice by saying *Subḥān Allah* by men, but the women should not make any sound, and instead hit the back of the palm with the other for warning.

The issue of women's voice

Is women's voice included in their *satr* per se, and it's causing to hear by non-Maḥrams is prohibited? The jurists differ on this issue. In the books of Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالى the voice of women is not included in their *satr*. In the case of Ḥanafī there are different views. Ibn Humām رحمه الله تعالى has included the voice in *satr* on the basis of statements in Nawāzil. Because of this the call for prayer اذان by women is regarded

makrūh by Ḥanafī School. However, it is established by *ḥadīth* that the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to talk to non-Maḥrams from behind the curtain even after the revelation of injunction of *ḥijāb*. Keeping in view all the material on this point, what seems to be the correct position is that hearing the voice of a woman is impermissible only when and where it may create a *fitnah*, but where there is no such apprehension, it is allowed. (Jaṣṣāṣ). However, the prudent way for women is to take care and avoid talking to non-Maḥrams, even from behind the curtains, unless necessary. (Only Allah knows best)

To go out wearing perfume

It is also included in this injunction that when women go out of the house for some need, they should not wear any perfume, because that is also their hidden *zīnah,* and it is impermissible to cause it to reach non-Maḥrams. In a *ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhī from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī رضي الله عنه those women are declared bad who go out wearing perfume.

Going out wearing decorated veil is also prohibited

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ رحمه الله تعالى has commented that when Qur'ān has included even the sound of ornaments as the exposure of *zīnah* and declared it unlawful, then going out wearing decorated veil would be unlawful more strongly. By inference it is also clear that although the face of women is not included in her *satr*, but it is the pivotal point of *zīnah*, hence, its hiding from the non-Maḥrams is essential, except in cases of need. (Jaṣṣāṣ)

وَتُوبُوٓا إِلَى اللّٰهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

And repent to Allah O believers, all of you - 24:31.

In this verse first the men have been enjoined to keep their eyes low, then the women are enjoined the same. After that women are directed to cover themselves before non-Maḥrams. After enjoining these injunctions separately to men and women, now a combined instruction is given that the sexual desire is a delicate thing, and it remains concealed from others. But everything, concealed or open, is completely known to Allah. Therefore, if someone has erred in following the foregoing injunctions, he should beg Allah's pardon, feel repentant on his past deeds and make a firm resolve not to indulge in them again.

Verse 32 - 33 ...

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامٰى مِنْكُمْ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَآئِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ نِكَاحًا حَتّٰى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۚ

And arrange the marriage of the spouse-less among you, and the capable from among your bond-men and bond-girls. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. [32] **And those who cannot afford marriage should keep chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace...**

Commentary

Some injunctions regarding marriage

It has been pointed out earlier that Sūrah an-Nūr contains mostly the injunctions relating to protection of chastity and continence, and prevention of obscenity and shamelessness. In this connection severe punishments against adultery and related matters are mentioned, then *isti'dhān* is highlighted, and after that *ḥijāb* for women is described. Since Islamic jurisprudence is based on the precept of moderation, all its injunctions are moderate, and have affinity with natural human emotions and desires. It is also based on the principle to control the tendency of excessiveness and transgression. When it is enjoined to desist strictly from unlawful lust, it is equally important to provide a lawful access for the natural human emotions and desires. At the same time it is also needed both from a rational and religious point of view that men and women are shown a way for the lawful copulation for the preservation of human race. In the terminology of Qur'ān and Sunnah it is called *nikāḥ* (marriage). In the verse under consideration the guardians of unmarried girls and the owners of slave girls and boys are enjoined to marry them off.

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامٰى مِنْكُمْ

And arrange the marriage of the spouse-less among you - 24:32.

Ayamā (ایامی) is the plural of Aym (ایم), which is used for all those men and women who are not married, irrespective of the situation whether

they have not yet been married or were married earlier and have become divorcee or widow /widower. The guardians of such men and women are directed in this verse to arrange their marriage.

Scholars and jurists are unanimous on the point that according to the manner of address of this verse the preferable and *masnūn* way of marriage is that men and women have it arranged through their guardians, rather than arranging it directly. There are many a worldly and religious benefits in this tradition, especially in the case of girls it is a sort of indecency that they arrange their own marriages. Also, there is a risk that this system may open the doors for obscenity. Therefore, in some narrations of *ḥadīth* women are prohibited to contract their own marriages without the mediation of guardians. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالیٰ and some other Imāms have ruled that this instruction describes a *sunnah* and the preferred way for the contract of marriage. But if an adult girl marries someone within her own *kuf'* without her guardian's permission, it is a proper marriage, although she would be reprehensible for this act, because it is against the *sunnah,* unless she has done so under unavoidable circumstances.

Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالیٰ and some other Imāms have ruled that her marriage will be null and void if carried out without her guardian's mediation. It is not the intention to describe and argue here the details of approach and arguments put forward by the two jurists on their different points of view, but this much is obvious from the verse under discussion that it is preferable to have guardian's mediation in the matter of marriage. But the Qur'ānic verse itself is silent on the issue of status of marriage, if solemnized without the consent of guardians. The other reason is that in the word Ayāmā (ایامیٰ) both male and female adults are included, and there is consensus that the marriage of adult boys is perfectly valid if solemnized without the mediation of guardians. No one considers that marriage to be null and void. But this is true that in either case it is against the sunnah, for which both should be reproached.

The status of marriage in Sharī'ah

Jurists are almost all unanimous that whoever has a strong apprehension that in case he does not marry, he would not be able to maintain the prescribed limits of Sharī'ah and will get involved in sins, and he has the means to get married, it is obligatory on him to get

married. As long as he does not get married, he will remain a sinner. But in case he does not have the means to get married, or a suitable woman is not available, or he does not possess the needed prompt dower etc. for all such situations the injunction is given in the next verse that he should keep striving to obtain what is required and until such time that the needful is arranged, he should keep his emotions under control and wait with patience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised such persons in this situation to fast continuously, for fasting calms down the sexual desire.

It is reported in Masnād of Aḥmad that the Holy Prophet ﷺ enquired from Sayyidnā 'Akkāf ؓ whether he had a wife, to which he replied in the negative. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ enquired whether he had a lawful slave girl. He again replied in the negative. Then he ﷺ asked 'Do you have the means?'. To this he replied in the affirmative. The purpose of this enquiry was to find out whether he possessed the means to arrange his marriage, to which he answered in the positive. After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'In that case you are a brother of Satan, for our *sunnah* is to get married. The worst persons among you are those who are unmarried, and the most mean among your men are those who die without marrying'. (Maẓharī).

Majority of the jurists have attributed this narration as well to that condition when there is a predominant risk of sinning by abstaining from marriage. The Holy Prophet ﷺ must have known the situation of 'Akkāf that he would not be able to resist. Similarly, it is reported in Masnād of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Anas ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had instructed him to get married, and warned against remaining bachelor. (Maẓharī). There are some other similar narrations of the *ḥadīth* as well, and majority of the jurists have held them to be applicable only in those situations where there is a strong apprehension of being involved in a sin if one avoids marriage. Similarly, jurists are almost all unanimous that if someone has strong notion that he would indulge in sin by marrying a woman, for instance he is not capable of meeting conjugal rights of the wife or will get involved for sure in some other sin, in such a situation marriage is prohibited or unbecoming for him.

Now the case of that person has to be looked at who is in an even position. For him neither the risk of sin is very strong by abstaining from marriage, nor there is a strong risk of sin if the marriage is performed. For

this situation there are different views of the jurists, that is, which act is better; to get married or abstaining from marriage and get involved in extra prayers. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى has ruled that getting married is better than offering extra prayers, while Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالى has recommended that getting involved in prayers is preferable. The reason for the different views is that by itself the marriage is a lawful act, just like eating, drinking sleeping etc. or as any other necessity of life is lawful, and the element of worship is included in marriage for the simple reason that one can save himself from sin by this act, and when the righteous children are born, it will add up to his reward. When one performs any lawful act with the intent of pleasing Allah Ta'ālā, it becomes an indirect worship for him. Eating, drinking, sleeping etc. all become indirect worship when carried out with this intention. Since occupation in prayers is a direct worship in itself, hence, Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالى regards prayers to be preferable to marriage. But in the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى the element of worship is greater in marriage than other lawful acts. In many Ṣaḥīḥ *aḥadīth* it is emphasized repeatedly to follow this tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the light of all these *aḥadīth* it becomes evident that marriage is not just lawful like other lawful acts, but is a *sunnah* (practice) of the messengers, and has also been emphasized repeatedly in *ḥadīth*. It is a worship not only from the viewpoint of intention but also being a tradition of the messengers. If someone suggests that by the same token eating, drinking and sleeping should also be regarded as *sunnah*, because all messengers used to perform them. The answer to this is very clear that despite these acts being performed by all messengers, no one has said or narrated in any *ḥadīth* that eating, drinking and sleeping are *sunnah* of the messengers. Instead these acts are regarded as common human habits, which were observed by messengers as well. As against this, marriage is clearly declared as *sunnah* of the messengers and the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself.

Tafsīr Maẓharī has given a moderate view on the subject that, if someone is on an even position, that is neither he is helpless or overcome by prevalence of lust, nor feels the risk of indulging in sin by abstaining from marriage, and thinks that if he gets married, his involvement in household would not be a hindrance in his worships and remembrance of

Allah Ta'ālā, then it is preferable for him to get married. This was exactly the case of the messengers of Allah and the righteous people of the Ummah. But if he has a hunch that his marriage and involvement in household will not let him promote his religious status and will hinder Allah's remembrance, then for him abstaining from marriage for performing worship would be preferable, provided he is in an even position, described above. Many a Qur'ānic verses are in support of this position, one of them being: يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَاۤ اَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ (O believers, let not your possessions nor your children divert you from Allah's remembrance - 63:9). This verse advises that the wealth and children should not come in the way of remembering Allah Ta'ālā.

وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَاِمَآئِكُمْ

And the capable from among your bond-men and bond-girls - 24:32.

This sentence is addressed to the masters of the slaves. Here the word *ṣāliḥīn* is used in its literal meaning, that is whoever among them has the means and capacity of marrying; arrangement of his/her marriage is made incumbent upon their owners and masters. Here the word capacity is purported to have the means to fulfill the conjugal rights of wife and ability to make payment of maintenance and prompt dower. If the word *ṣāliḥīn* is taken in its common sense, that is good and pious people, then their exclusiveness from the rest will be on the basis that marriage is basically the means to keep away from the sins, a trait which only the good persons possess.

So, it is made incumbent upon the masters of the slaves and slave girls that those among them who have the ability to get married, their marriage should be arranged. It is purported to mean here that if they show their need and desire to get married, then according to some jurists it is binding on the owners to marry them off. But the majority of jurists have ruled that in such a situation it is incumbent upon the masters not to place any hindrance in their marriage and allow them to get married, because the marriage of slaves and slave girls cannot be performed without the permission of their owners. Thus, this injunction is similar in nature with another verse of the Holy Qur'ān فَلَا تَعْضُلُوْهُنَّ اَنْ يَّنْكِحْنَ اَزْوَاجَهُنَّ that is ' It is incumbent upon the guardians of women not to stop the

women under their charge from marriage'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also said on the subject that 'If someone of that kind comes to you with the proposal and you like his morals, then surely marry him off. If you do not do it then great mischief will be created on earth'. (Tirmidhī) The gist of this all is that the owners are instructed here not to make any delay in granting permission of marriage to their subjects, notwithstanding that arrangement of their marriage may not be their responsibility. (Allah knows best)

إِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ

If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace - 24:32.

There is a good news in this verse for such poor Muslims who want to marry for the security of their religious obligation, but they have no means. If they marry with the good intention for the security of their religion and to follow the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Allah Ta'ālā will grant them sufficient means. There is also an advice in the verse to those who might reject the proposal of marriage from poor people on the basis of their current condition. Wealth is something which does not always stay. The important thing is merit of a person. If they possess merit then their proposal for marriage should not be turned down.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that Allah Ta'ālā has persuaded all Muslims for marriage in this verse, for which He has included every one, either free or slave, and has promised to enrich them if they marry. (Ibn Kathīr). And Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ while addressing the Muslims said that 'You follow the injunction of Allah Ta'ālā for marriage, and He will fulfill His promise for granting the riches'. Then he recited this verse إِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ (32) Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ has said 'If you want to be rich, then get married, because Allah Ta'ālā has said إِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ (Ibn Kathīr)

Warning

It is commented in Tafsīr Maẓharī that it should, however, be noted that Allah Ta'ālā's promise to grant riches to the one who will marry is only on the condition that his intention is to safeguard his chastity and to follow the *sunnah*. After that he should have trust and faith in Allah Ta'ālā, for which the confirmation is available in the next verse, which reads: وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ نِكَاحًا حَتّٰى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ (And those who cannot

afford marriage should keep chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace - 24:33). 'It means that the people who do not have the material wealth for the marriage, and in case they marry, there is the risk of not fulfilling the rights of wife and their becoming sinners, they should wait with patience until Allah grants them riches from His bounty. A method has been stated in the *ḥadīth* for achieving the required patience, which is keeping fasts abundantly. If they will follow the advice, Allah Ta'ālā will grant them so much material resources that they will be able to afford the expenses of marriage.

... Verse 33

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوْهُمْ اِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ
فِيْهِمْ خَيْرًا ق صلے وَّاٰتُوْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اٰتٰىكُمْ ط وَلَا تُكْرِهُوْا
فَتَيٰتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَآءِ اِنْ اَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوْا عَرَضَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ط
وَمَنْ يُّكْرِهْهُّنَّ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۳۳﴾

... And those of your slaves who seek the contract of Kitābah (emancipation by paying money), contract Kitābah with them, if you know of some good in them. And give them out of the wealth of Allah that He has given to you. And do not compel your maids to prostitution - if they wish to observe chastity - in order that you may seek the temporary benefit of the worldly life. And if one compels them, then after their being compelled, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [33]

Commentary

Owners of the slaves and slave girls were advised in the previous verse that they should allow their subjects to marry if they so desire. They should not delay their marriage to curb their natural urge for their own expediency. The essence of this advice is to save the subjects from trouble and that they be treated graciously. In the same context another direction is given in this verse to the owners of slaves and slave girls that if their subjects wish to enter into a deal with them for making payment against their freedom, then it is desirable for the owners to concede to this wish,

whicn will bring them good reward. This instruction is commonly taken by the jurists, like the author of Hidāyah, as a recommendatory instruction in that it is not compulsory for the owners to concede for freedom of their subjects against payment, yet it is preferable to do so. The procedure for entering into a deal of freedom is that the subject asks his owner to set up an amount with mutual consent for the freedom, which he should earn with his labour and pay to the owner. Alternatively, the owner can also initiate the deal and with mutual consent on payment of a certain amount whereby the slaves can earn their freedom. When such a deal is struck with mutual consent between the owner and the slave, then it becomes mandatory under Islamic law, and the owner has no authority to call it off. As soon as the slave makes the payment of the agreed amount, he gets free automatically.

The amount of money so agreed for the freedom of slave is called *badal-al-kitābah* for which Islamic law has fixed no limit. It may be the same as the cost of slave, or more or less. The amount on which the parties mutually agree will be regarded as *badal-al-kitābah*. The essence behind the advice given in this verse is to open up the doors of freedom for the slaves. This is but one such instruction which points out toward the underlying objective of Islamic law of allowing freedom for slaves. In all types of expiations, a common injunction is freedom of slaves. Even otherwise, there is a promise of generous blessings for freeing the slaves. Arrangement of the treaty for freedom in exchange of money is one such route. This is why there is so much persuasion and emphasis on this. However, a condition has also been placed with this treaty إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا (33). The treaty will only be in order when you notice signs of goodness in them. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ and many other scholars have explained that here the word 'Khair' (good) is purported to mean the strength to earn. Hence, it means that someone who has the strength to earn and can make payment should be allowed to enter the deal, otherwise his labour will be wasted on one hand and the owner will also suffer loss. Some other scholars have given another explanation that goodness and betterment mean here that there should be no risk of any harm to the Muslims because of his freedom. For instance, the slave may be an infidel and he might have been helping his infidel brethren. As a matter of fact the word 'Khair' (good) stands here for both the meanings,

that is the slave should have the strength to earn, and there should be no risk of any harm to the Muslims as a result of his freedom. (Maẓharī)

وَاٰتُوْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِىْٓ اٰتٰىكُمْ

Give them out of the wealth of Allah that He has given to you - 24:33.

This address is directed towards Muslims in general, and to the owners of the slaves in particular. When the freedom of a slave is dependent on a fixed amount to be given to his owner, then it is incumbent upon Muslims to help him collect that money. For this they can pay from the *zakāh* money as well. And the owners are induced to contribute on their own or reduce the amount of the treaty. It was the practice of the Companions to reduce the amount of treaty by one third or one fourth, depending upon their capacity. (Maẓharī)

An important economic issue and the Qur'ānic verdict on it

The present day world is totally materialistic. Everyone seems to have forgotten about the life hereafter and has completely entangled himself in money making. All types of researches, contemplation and developments, revolve round economic uplift only. Detailed discussions and researches on finer economic points have raised its status many fold, and now it has assumed the position of greatest art. The world thinkers have propounded two well-known theories, which, paradoxically, are in conflict with each other. Because of the inherent conflict between them, the world at large is divided in two groups, who are unfortunately at daggers drawn with each other, resulting in the loss of peace and tranquility of the world.

One theory has given birth to capitalist system, commonly known as capitalism. The other one is the socialist system which is called as socialism or communism. It is an every day common experience, which neither of the two systems can deny, that whatever the man earns or produces in this world through his hard work, its basic source of production is the natural resources, like water, the produce from earth or any other natural produce. The man produces millions of things of his need and use from natural resources through his skill, hard work, ingenuity and composing or decomposing their certain elements. It is but natural to think that there is someone who creates the natural resources. They have not come into being of their own. It also goes without saying

that the One who has created the natural resources is the real owner and master of them all. The natural resources have been passed on to man for a limited period (his life span) for his benefit and use. It does not mean that the man has become the master of natural resources for all times, because his own life is so short. Moreover, man does not, and cannot, exercise total control and authority on all natural resources for all the time. For instance, man can irrigate the fields with water, but he cannot create water if there is a drought. Therefore, it is clear that man is not free to use or control them, and hence should follow the instructions given to him by their Crea or and Master. But in the frenzy of materialism everyone has forgotten even the concept of real Master and Creator. The only controversy between them is that whether the one who possesses the factors of production becomes their owner, or all these resources are common to all and everyone has a right to benefit from them.

The first theory is that of the capitalist system which grants freedom of ownership to man in that he can acquire anything by any means, and is also free to use and spend it any way he likes. There is absolutely no restriction on him. The infidels and disbelievers of the olden times professed the same belief, who objected before Sayyidnā Shu'aib ﷺ as to why should he place any restriction on their wealth, which belonged to them and they were its owners. They claimed that the prophet had no right to tell them as to where the spending was permitted and where it was not? The meaning of Qur'ānic verse أَوْ أَنْ نَّفْعَلَ فِيٓ أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشٰٓؤُا (or that we do with our wealth what we wish - 11:87) is the same. The other theory is that of socialism, which does not allow ownership to anyone of any thing, and professes common ownership of everyone and equal right to all. This is the original theory of communism, but when they felt that this is not practicable, they exempted some objects from the common ownership.

As against these two extremes the Holy Qur'ān has given a system in which the most fundamental concept is that every thing belongs to Allah Ta'ālā, who has given the charge of some things to man temporarily by His grace and bounty. For such things where man has been given the charge and possession, others have been debarred to make any claim on their use, without the permission of the owner. But despite the possession and ownership being given to man, he is not granted freedom to earn or spend them in any manner he likes. Both for earning and spending there

are wise and equitable rules and regulations which are clearly defined, and which clearly identify the permissible and impermissible ways of earning and spending. In addition to this, it has also been made incumbent upon him to pass on certain part of his possession to others, which is made the right of recipients on those things.

Although the verse under reference deals with a different subject yet it contains some important principles relating to this economic issue. So, look at the wordings of the verse rather intently وَاٰتُوْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِیْۤ اٰتٰىكُمْ 'Give them out of the wealth of Allah that He has given to you - 33'. Three things come out of this statement. One, that Allah is the real owner of every thing. Two, that He has given the possession of certain things to man by His grace. Three, that there are certain restrictions on things which He has given to man. Spending of certain things has been prohibited, and spending of other things is made obligatory, while spending of some others is made preferable.

The other injunction given in this verse is for the eradication of an uncouth custom, and for curbing adultery and obscenity وَلَا تُكْرِهُوْا فَتَيٰتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَآءِ 'Do not compel your maid to prostitution - 33'. During the pre-Islamic period many people used to have this business done by their slave girls. When Islam placed strict punishments on adultery, both on free and slave individuals, then it was necessary to enjoin special strict orders to stop and eradicate this uncivilized custom.

اِنْ اَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا (If they wish to observe chastity - 24:33). It means that when those slave girls express their wish to avoid adultery and remain pure, then pressurizing them on your part is extremely imprudent and shameless. Although the wording of the injunction is conditional, yet there is consensus of Ummah that the intention here is not to press the slave girls for adultery, irrespective of the situation whether they express their wish to avoid it or not. In other words, it is not meant here that in case they do not wish to avoid adultery, then it is permitted to force them into it. What is intended here is to tell that in the pre-Islamic days obscenity was common, so the slave girls did not mind adultery. Although after the advent of Islam they repented and wished not to be involved in this practice, yet their owners still forced them for the crime, which they resented. On this situation this injunction was revealed, in which their owners are warned and reproached that while they (the slave girls) want

to avoid a shameful act, you are trying to force it on them.

فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

> Then after their being compelled, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful - 33.

The gist of this sentence is that it is prohibited to force the slave girls to adultery. If someone does that and the slave girl gets involved in adultery because of the compulsion exercised by her owner, then Allah Ta'ālā will pardon her sin and that sin will be passed on to the one who had forced her. (Maẓharī).

Verses 34 - 40

وَلَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتٍ مُّبَيِّنٰتٍ وَّمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ اَللّٰهُ نُوْرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ مَثَلُ نُوْرِهٖ
كَمِشْكٰوةٍ فِيْهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ؕ اَلْمِصْبَاحُ فِيْ زُجَاجَةٍ ؕ اَلزُّجَاجَةُ كَاَنَّهَا
كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُّوْقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ زَيْتُوْنَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَّلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ ۙ
يَّكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيْٓءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ؕ نُوْرٌ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ ؕ يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ
لِنُوْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۳۵﴾ فِيْ بُيُوْتٍ اَذِنَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيْهَا اسْمُهٗ ۙ يُسَبِّحُ
لَهٗ فِيْهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿۳۶﴾ رِجَالٌ ۙ لَّا تُلْهِيْهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَاِقَامِ الصَّلٰوةِ وَاِيْتَآءِ الزَّكٰوةِ ۙ يَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيْهِ
الْقُلُوْبُ وَالْاَبْصَارُ ﴿۳۷﴾ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ
مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿۳۸﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْٓا اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ ۭ بِقِيْعَةٍ يَّحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْاٰنُ مَآءً ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
جَآءَهٗ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْـًٔا وَّوَجَدَ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ فَوَفّٰىهُ حِسَابَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ سَرِيْعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿۳۹﴾ اَوْ كَظُلُمٰتٍ فِيْ بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَّغْشٰىهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهٖ

مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ۚ ظُلُمٰتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ ۚ اِذَآ اَخْرَجَ يَدَهٗ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرٰىهَا ۚ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ نُوْرًا فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ نُّوْرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

And indeed We have sent down to you enlightening verses and an exemplary description of those who passed away before you and a good counsel for the God-fearing. [34]

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is that of a niche in which there is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass - the glass looks like a brilliant star - it is lit by (the oil of) a blessed tree, the olive, which is neither eastern, nor western. Its oil is about to emit light even if fire has not touched it - (it is) light upon light. Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills. And Allah describes examples for the people, and Allah knows everything well. [35]

(The guided people worship Allah) in the houses that Allah has permitted to be raised and where His name is recounted and His purity is pronounced, in the morning and in the evening, [36] **by men whom no trade or sale makes neglectful of the remembrance of Allah, nor from establishing Ṣalāh and paying Zakāh; they are fearful of a day in which the hearts and the eyes will be overturned.** [37] **The fate (of such people) is that Allah will reward them for the best deeds they did and will give them more out of His grace. And Allah gives whom He wills without counting.** [38]

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert plane which a thirsty person deems to be water, until when he comes to it, he finds it nothing, and finds (the decree of) Allah with him, so He pays him his account in full. And Allah is swift at reckoning. [39] **Or (their deeds) are like layers of darkness in a vast deep sea overwhelmed by a wave, above which there is another wave, above which there are clouds - layers of darkness, one above the other. When one puts forth his hand, he can hardly see it. And**

the one to whom Allah does not give light can have no light at all. [40]

Commentary

The scholars call this verse as the 'Verse of Radiance', because it describes in great detail the radiance of faith and the darkness of disbelief.

The definition of Nūr (Light)

Imām Ghazzālī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has given the definition of Nūr (light) as الظاهر بنفسه والمظهر لغيره that is something which is bright and manifest on its own, and makes other things bright and evident. Tafsir Maẓharī has explained that Nūr is in fact that condition which is initially perceived by man's sense of sight, and then through that perception he comprehends all those things which can be seen by eye, such as in the case of rays of sun and the moon, which on falling on a solid mass brightens it up, and then through the reflection from solid mass brightens other things. Hence, it is evident that the word Nūr cannot be used for Allah Ta'ālā in its literal or common meaning, because He is free from body and materiality. Therefore, there is consensus among the scholars that the use of word Nūr for Allah Ta'ālā in the verse under reference is purported for *Munawwir*, meaning the one who brightens, or may be the master of brightening is referred here as Nūr, in the same way as the possessor of grace is sometimes called Grace, or the possessor of justice is called the Justice. So, meaning of the verse is that Allah bestows Nūr to earth and the heaven, and to everything living there, and the Nūr is purported to be the Nūr of righteousness. Ibn Kathīr has reported the explanation put forward by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that الله هادى اهل السمٰوٰت والارض : (that is, Allah is the Guide of all living in the heavens and the earth).

Nūr of the believer

مَثَلُ نُورِهٖ كَمِشْكٰوةٍ (The example of His light is that of a niche in which there is a lamp - 24:35). This is a nice example of Allah Ta'ālā's Nūr of guidance, which penetrates into the heart of the believer. Ibn Jarīr has reported its explanation put forward by Sayyidnā Ubayy b. Ka'b ﷺ.

هوالمؤمن الّذى جعل الله الايمان والقراٰن فى صدره، فضرب الله مثله فقال: الله نورالسّمٰوٰت والارض، فبدأ بنور نفسه ثم ذكر نورالمؤمن، فقال: مثل نور من امن به، فكان اُبّى بن كعب يقرأها مثل نور من امن به. (ابن كثير)

It means that this is the example of the believer in whose heart Allah Ta'ālā has laid down the Nūr of faith and of the Qur'ān. In this verse Allah Ta'ālā has first mentioned His own Nūr ٱللَّهُ نُورُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ, and then the Nūr of the believer's heart and the following example is for the one who believes in Him. Sayyidnā Ubayy Ibn Ka'b ﷺ used to recite this verse as مثل نور من آمن به instead of مثل نوره (to explain this). Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ has also reported the same meaning and recitation of the verse from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Ibn Kathīr has narrated all these explanations and then remarked that there are two view points among the jurists about the pronoun of مَثَلُ نُورِهِ (the example of *his* light). One, that this pronoun has reference toward Allah Ta'ālā, and thus the meaning of the verse is 'Allah's Nūr placed in the heart of believers naturally', and the example of that is كَمِشْكَوٰةٍ (like a niche). This explanation is put forward by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. The other explanation is that the personal pronoun refers to the believers, who are presumed to have been referred to by the context. So, the example given in the verse can be explained as follows: The chest of a believer is like a niche, while the heart of the believer placed in the chest is like a lamp (placed in the niche). Then the transparent oil of olive is the example of the natural *nūr* (light) of guidance which is deposited in the nature of a believer and which has the inherent capability to accept the truth (which is indicated in the verse by the words 'Its oil is about to emit light even if fire has not touched it). Then as the olive oil produces brightness when caused to burn with the flame of fire, the same way natural Nūr of guidance which is placed in the heart of the believer, when joins the message and knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā, then it gets brightened and also brightens the world. When the companions and their pupils confined this example to the heart of a believer alone, they have most probably done so because it is only the believer who draws benefit from this Nūr. Otherwise the natural Nūr of guidance which is placed in the hearts of humans at the time of their creation, is not confined to believers, but is part of the nature and instinct of every human being. It is for this reason that one can see all around the world that there are people in every nook and corner, in all societies and religions, who believe in the existence of God and His Omnipotence, and do turn towards Him. No matter one may make all types of errors in the perception and understanding of God, yet every individual does believe by nature in His existence, with the exception of a few atheists, who have

lost their natural instinct.

A Ṣaḥīḥ *ḥadīth* endorses this view, which says, كُلُّ مَوْلُوْدٍ يُوْلَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ that is 'Every child is born with natural instinct'. Later, his parents put him on the wrong path. This natural instinct is the guidance of faith. The guidance of faith and its Nūr is bestowed to every individual at the time of his birth, and because of this Nūr of guidance, one possesses the ability to accept the truth. When they come to know about the revelations of Allah through His messengers and their deputies, they readily accept them, except those unfortunate people who have erased the Divine Nūr from their heart with their wrong doings. Perhaps this is the reason that in the beginning of the verse the bestowal of Nūr is said to be common to all, which includes every one on the earth and the heavens, without any difference between believers or disbelievers, but towards the end of the verse it is said يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُوْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ, that is 'Allah Ta'ālā guides to His light whomsoever He wills - 35'. Here the will of Allah is not pointing toward that Divine Nūr which is bestowed to all humans, but toward the Qur'ānic Nūr, which is not availed by every one, except those fortunate ones, to whom Divine help is granted. Otherwise even one's endeavor goes waste without Divine help, and sometimes becomes detrimental :

اذا لم يكن عون من الله للفتى فاوّل ما يجنى عليه اجتهاده

'If there is no help to man from Allah, then his striving puts him to trouble instead'.

The Nūr of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى has narrated that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه once enquired from Ka'b al-Aḥbār as to how would he explain this verse مَثَلُ نُوْرِهٖ كَمِشْكٰوةٍ. Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who was a great Muslim scholar of Torah and Injīl, said that this example was meant for the heart of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Mishkāt (the niche) stands for his chest, Zujājah (glass) for his heart and Miṣbāḥ (lamp) for his prophethood. What was unique about this Nūr of prophethood was that even before the declaration of prophethood it had the illumination of light for the people. When the revelation from Allah is coupled with the Nūr of prophethood, then it turns into such radiance that the whole world is brightened.

Before the declaration of prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and even before his birth, some strange and amazing events had taken place

in the world, which were in fact advance notice of the incoming prophet, and are called *Irhaṣāt* in the vocabulary of the scholars of *ḥadīth*. The difference between this word and miracle is that the latter is used for such unusual events which are bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā to his messengers for the endorsement of their prophethood, while *Irhaṣāt* are those unusual events which happen before the declaration of prophethood. There are a number of unusual incidents which are recorded by several authentic narrations, and have been compiled by Shaikh Jalaluddīn Sayuṭī رحمه الله تعالی in his book (خصائص کبری -Khaṣāiṣ Kūbrā – and by Abū Nu'aim in his دلائل النبوۃ - Dalail-un-Nubuwwah. Other scholars have also collected many such incidents in their books. Tafsīr Maẓharī has reproduced a good number of these events.

Benefits of olive oil

شَجَرَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ زَيْتُوْنَةٍ (A blessed tree, the olive - 35.). This is an endorsement that olive and its tree is blessed by Allah and is beneficial and useful. Scholars have commented that Allah Ta'ālā has instilled many a benefits in it. Olive oil is used in the burning of lamps. Its light is the brightest and clearest as against any other oil. It is eaten as a fruit and its oil is used in cooking. The interesting part is that there is no need of any machine for the extraction of its oil. When the fruit is ripe, the oil comes out automatically. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has asked to eat and massage the body with olive oil. (Baghawī – Maẓharī)

فِيْ بُيُوْتٍ اَذِنَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيْهَا اسْمُهٗ ۙ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ فِيْهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ

(The guided people worship Allah) in the houses that Allah has permitted to be raised and where His name recounted and His purity is pronounced, in the morning and in the evening, - 36.

In the previous verse Allah Ta'ālā had given a unique example of placing His Nūr of guidance in the heart of believers. Toward the end of the verse it was clarified that only those draw benefit from this Nūr, whom Allah loves and grants Divine help. In the above verse those places and buildings are referred to where such believers spend most of their time, especially the five times of prayers. These are the buildings for which Allah Ta'ālā has instructed to keep them high in esteem, and where His name be remembered. The splendor of such buildings is that Allah's name is remembered there in the morning and evening. That is He is worshipped there all the time by the people, who's attributes will

follow soon.

The above explanation is based on the assumption that فِى بُيُوتٍ (in the houses) has an association with the sentence يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُوْرِهٖ (Allah guides to this light whomsoever He wills). (Ibn Kathīr etc.) Some others are of the opinion that it has a link with the word يُسَبِّحُ (His purity is pronounced), which is used later in the verse. But the first version appears more appropriate in the context of the subject. In that case the meaning of the verse would be that the Nūr of guidance referred to in the example of the previous verse can be found in the buildings and houses where He is remembered all the time. There is consensus among commentators that here the word 'houses' is purported for mosques.

Mosques are houses of Allah and their respect is obligatory

Qurṭubī has preferred the view that the word 'raised' used in the verse means to respect the mosques and has quoted the following *ḥadīth* of Sayyidnā 'Anas ؓ in support of his contention.

> من احبّ اللّه عزّوجلّ فليحبّنى، ومن احبّنى فليحبّ اصحابى، ومن احبّ اصحابى فليحبّ القرانٰ، ومن احبّ القران فليحبّ المساجد، فانها افنية اللّه اذن اللّه فى رفعها وبارک فيها ميمونة ميمون اهلها محفوظة محفوظ أهلها،هم فى صلاتهم واللّه عزّوجلّ فى حوائجهم هم فى المساجد واللّه من ورائهم. (قرطبى)
>
> The Holy Prophet ﷺ said "Whoever wishes to love Allah should love me, and whoever wishes to love me should love my companions, and whoever wishes to love my companions should love the Qur'ān, and whoever wishes to love Qur'ān should love the mosques, because they are Allah's houses. Allah has enjoined to 'raise' them, and has made them blessed. They are blessed and those who live there are also blessed. They are in the protection of Allah, and those who live there are also in the protection of Allah. Those who are busy there in their prayers, Allah get their works done and fulfill their needs. While they are in the mosques Allah protects their household during their absence". (Qurṭubī)

Meaning of raising of mosques

اَذِنَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ تُرْفَعَ (That Allah has permitted to be raised - 36). The word اَذِنَ (*'adhina*) is derived from اِذْن (*'idhn*), which means to allow or give permission, and the word تُرْفَعَ (*turfa'a*) is derived from رَفَع (*raf'*), which means to raise, uplift or exalt. So, the meaning of this verse is that Allah

has allowed the raising of the mosques. Here 'allowed' means 'enjoined', and 'raising' means 'to venerate'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has explained that Allah Ta'ālā has prohibited Muslims from talking or doing anything absurd in the mosques. (Ibn Kathīr).

'Ikrimah and Mujāhid رحمهم الله تعالیٰ, the two Imāms of Tafsīr, are of the opinion that raising of the mosques carries here the sense of building the mosques in the same way as Qur'ān says about the building of Ka'bah وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرٰهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ (And when Ibrahim was raising up the foundations of the House - 2:127). Here the raising of foundation is purported for building (construction) of foundation. Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has given a different view that the word 'raised' is used here for respect and veneration of mosques, and to keep them clean from filthy and impure things, as narrated in a *ḥadīth* that, when an impure (*najis*) thing is brought in the mosque, it contracts itself in a similar manner as the human skin contracts from the fire. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudri ﷺ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that whoever takes out dirty, impure and vexatious things from the mosque, Allah Ta'ālā will make a house for him in paradise. (Ibn Mājah). Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها has narrated that 'the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed us to make mosques (special places for offering prayers) in our houses (as well), and keep them clean and pure'. (Qurṭubī).

As a matter of fact, the word تُرْفَعَ (to be raised) encompasses both the meanings of building and veneration of the mosques. It also signifies to keep them clean, which means to make them free of all types of filth and dirt. It is also part of cleanliness to keep them free of any foul smell. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited to go in the mosques without cleaning the mouth after eating onions or garlic, which is reported in many books of *ḥadīth*. Cigarettes, cigars and all other preparations of tobacco also fall under the same instruction. Burning any oil which emits foul odor is also not permitted in the mosque.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ that he said 'I had seen that in case the Holy Prophet ﷺ noticed foul smell from someone's mouth, he used to turn him out from the mosque and send to Baqī', and would say that if someone has to eat onion and garlic, he should cook it properly, so that its odor is eliminated'. Scholars have drawn the conclusion from this *ḥadīth* that if someone is suffering

from such a disease that people feel discomfort standing next to him in prayers, then he too can be removed from the mosque. In such an eventuality he should himself restrain from going to mosque and offer his prayers at home until such time that he is recovered from that disease.

Exaltation of Mosques

The majority of companions and *tābi'īn* (the generation next to them) are of the opinion that exaltation of mosques means that mosques be built and be kept free of every thing evil. Some people have also included in it the outward appearance and grandeur of the buildings of the mosques, and have argued that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ghanī ﷺ had used hard wood in the building of the Prophet's mosque to give it an impressive look. Later, Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul Azīz رحمه الله تعالىٰ had the Prophet's mosque improved further both materially and by decoration. This was done during the lifetime of companions and their pupils, and no one objected to this. Later on, many a kings spent very lavishly on building of mosques. Walīd Ibn 'Abdul Mālik had spent during his caliphate three times the annual income from the entire Syria on the construction and decoration of the Grand Mosque of Damascus, which is still there even now. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالىٰ has ruled that if there is no element of ostentation and egotism, and the intent is to please Allah and veneration of His house, then there is no objection in the construction and decoration of majestic and grandiose mosques, rather one should expect a good reward for that act.

Some merits of Mosques

Abū Dāwūd has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umamah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said that whoever gets out of his house after ablution with the intent of offering obligatory prayer in the mosque, his reward is like the one who has got off from his house wearing *iḥrām* for performing Ḥajj, and whoever gets out of his house after ablution for the prayer of Ishrāq in the mosque, his reward is like the one of performing 'Umrah. A prayer after another prayer, provided one does not talk or do any work in between, is written in *'illiyyīn*. Further, it is reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Buraidah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that those who go to mosques in darkness, give them the good tiding of complete Nūr (light) on the Dooms Day. (Muslim)

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū

Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that a man's offering of prayer in congregation is more than twenty times better than offering in the house or in the shop. It is because if someone sets out for the mosque after ablution with the intention of offering prayers and for no other purpose, then on every single step his status will improve by one degree and one sin will be forgiven until he reaches the mosque. Then as long as he will sit in the mosque waiting for the congregation to start, he will keep getting the reward of the prayers, and the angels will keep praying for him 'Ya Allah, Bestow Your grace on him, and forgive him, until he harms someone or his ablution is wasted'. Sayyidnā Ḥakam Ibn 'Umair ﷺ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said 'Live in this world like a guest and make mosques your abode, and make your hearts tender (be kind hearted) and ponder (over Allah's bounties) frequently, and weep (out of His fear) very often. Let not the mundane desires overcome you to make you change from this position, and you get involved in building houses unnecessarily, where you do not ever live, and get anxious to accumulate wealth more than your need, and desire for such things for the future which you cannot get'. Sayyidnā Abū Dardah ﷺ advised his son "Mosque should be your abode, because I have heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that 'Mosques are the abodes of Muttaqui (the God fearing) people. Whoever makes the mosque his abode (through remembering Allah abundantly) Allah Ta'ālā becomes guarantor for his comfort and tranquility, and to make him pass through the bridge of Ṣirāṭ with ease'". Abū Ṣādiq 'Azdī wrote to Shu'aib b. Ḥabḥāb in a letter 'Get hold of mosques as a necessity, because I have learnt a tradition saying that mosques were the meeting places of messengers'.

In a *ḥadīth* it is reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'Towards the end there will be people who will sit in the mosques in circles, and will discuss worldly affairs and their love for mundane benefits. You do not sit with those people who come to the mosques for this, because Allah does not need such people to come to the mosques. 'Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Musayyab ﷺ said that the one who sits in the mosque is like he sits in the company of his Lord, so it is incumbent upon him not to say anything but good words (Qurṭubī).

Fifteen etiquettes of the mosques

Scholars have named fifteen items as etiquettes of the mosques. They

are:

On entering the mosque one should greet the people already sitting there, with *salām* and if there is no one then say السلام علينا وعلى عباد الله الصالحين (But this is required when those present in the mosque are not offering their extra prayer or reciting Qur'ān. If they are busy in any of these acts, then he should not greet them.)

After getting in the mosque one should offer two Rak'ats as *tahiyyah tul-Masjid*. (This is required at a time when offering prayers is not prohibited, that is the time of sun rise, sun set or when sun is directly overhead)

Should not carry out any transactions of sale or purchase in the mosque.

Should not carry any weapons in the mosque.

Should not make an announcement for the search of any of his lost items.

Should not raise his voice in the mosque.

Should not discuss worldly affairs in the mosque.

Should not quarrel with any one in the mosque.

Should not try to force his way into a row where there is no room.

Should not cross over in front of someone offering prayer.

Should avoid spitting or blowing of nose in the mosque.

Should not crackle fingers in the mosque.

Should not play with any part of the body.

Should keep clean of any filth, and should not take a baby or an insane along in the mosque.

Should keep busy in remembrance of Allah abundantly.

After listing these fifteen etiquettes Qurṭubī has remarked that whoever has fulfilled these requirements has done justice with the mosque, and it has become a place of charm and security for him.

I have written a booklet on etiquettes and formalities of mosques

under the title "آداب المساجد" (in Urdu). Anyone interested in the subject can consult it.

Houses meant exclusively for remembrance of Allah and for learning Qur'an or religious education also have the status of mosques

Abū Ḥayān has explained in Tafsīr Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ that the word فِى بُيُوتٍ "in the houses" used in Qur'ān has a general connotation. It includes not only the mosques but also those houses which are exclusive for teaching Qur'ān and related religious teachings, such as Madāris (religious schools) or Maktabs. They also fall under the same category, and their respect and veneration is also obligatory.

Special wisdom for using the word 'allowed' in the verse

Scholars are all unanimous that the word أَذِنَ *'adhina* (allowed) is used here for command or order. But then the question is, what is the reason for using this word (instead or 'ordered' or 'enjoined')? Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī has described a subtle consideration in that the underlying objective is to train and induce the believers and the righteous to be ever ready to perform anything which is meant for pleasing Allah Ta'ālā, so much so that they need not be ordered to perform something for the pleasure of Allah, rather they should be waiting for the permission to perform it, and the moment they receive the go-ahead signal, they should hurry to carry it out.

يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ

Where His name is recounted - 36.

Here, the expression is 'recounting the name of Allah' encompasses all types of His remembrance, which include extra prayers, recitation of Qur'ān, learning of Islamic teachings, sermons, lectures on Sharī'ah, etc.

رِجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ

By men whom no trade or sale makes neglectful of the remembrance of Allah - 37.

This verse describes special attributes of those believers who are the distinguished recipients of the Nūr of guidance and remain in the mosques. By the use of word *Rijāl* رِجَال (men) there is a hint that only men's presence is required in the mosques. For women it is better that

they offer their prayers at homes.

Musnad of Aḥmad and Baihaqī have related a *ḥadīth* of Sayyidah Umm Salmah رضى الله عنها that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said خير مساجد النساء قعر بيوتهن . 'The best mosques for women are the secluded corners of their homes'.

This verse describes that the involvement in trade and sales does not stop the righteous believers from the remembrance of Allah. Since 'sale' is included in the word 'trade', some commentators have preferred to assume trade for purchase only for the sake of comparison, while others have taken the trade in its common sense, that is transactions of sale and purchase, and have explained the wisdom of using the word 'sale' separately for the reason that trade transactions have a wide scope where profits and benefits are received after a long time. On the other hand by selling something one receives the money with profit immediately in cash. Hence, it is mentioned separately to stress that they do not bring into consideration even the most lucrative mundane benefit as against the prayers and remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ has said that this verse was revealed in connection with the market people, and his son, Sayyidnā Sālim, has related that one day his father was passing through the market and the time for prayers had come. Then he noticed that people started closing their shops and set out to go towards the mosque. On that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ said that it is for these persons that the Qur'ān has said رِجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ.

There were two companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his time, one was a general trader and the other a blacksmith who used to produce swords and sell them. It was the habit of the trader that when he would hear the call of the prayer while weighing something, he would leave every thing there and get up to go to the mosque for prayers. The other one who was the blacksmith, when he was busy hammering the hot iron and would hear the call of the prayer, he would stop his hand wherever it was and throw the hammer out of his hand to rush to the mosque for prayers, without even bothering to strike the raised hammer. This verse was revealed in their praise. (Qurṭubī)

Most of the companions were traders

This verse also points out that most of the companions were either traders or manufacturers, that is in the professions involved with the market, because the quality mentioned in the verse can be attributed only to those who are in the profession of trade and sales and do not let their profession interfere in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā. Otherwise it is irrelevant. (Rūḥ)

يَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيْهِ الْقُلُوْبُ وَالْاَبْصَارُ

They are fearful of a day in which the hearts and the eyes will be overturned - 37.

The last quality of those believers who are mentioned in the above verse is that despite being busy in Allah's obedience, remembrance and worshiping all the time, they do not become careless or free themselves from Allah's fear. Instead the fear of reckoning on the Day of Judgment is constantly in their mind, which is the fruit of Nūr of guidance granted to them by Allah Ta'ālā, mentioned in the earlier verse يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُوْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ. Toward the end of the verse their reward is described that they shall be graced with the best reward for their actions by Allah Ta'ālā, and then the verse says: وَيَزِيْدَ هُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ (and will give them more out of His grace - 38). It means that their reward will not end with the recompense against the good actions, but some extra reward will also be given on His own وَاللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُ من يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَاب (and Allah gives whom He wills without counting - 38), that is neither Allah is bound by any rule nor does His treasure gets depleted. He grants unlimited sustenance to whomever He likes.

So far the righteous believers were described whose chests are the niches for the Nūr of guidance and who readily accept the Nūr of guidance. In verses 39 and 40 those disbelievers are being described who were given in their nature the Nūr of guidance by Allah Ta'ālā, but when Allah's revelation reached them to lit them up, they turned away to reject it and lost the Nūr to stay in the darkness. Since the disbelievers and atheists are of two types, therefore, two examples are related here. One category is that of those disbelievers who believe in the Dooms Day and Hereafter, and have faith that some of their good acts, according to their own reckoning, will be rewarded in the Hereafter. The second category is that of atheists, who do not believe in the Hereafter and the Dooms Day.

The example of the deeds of the first category is that of a mirage, which is nothing but illusion of sight. In a level plain the shining sand creates the illusion of water from a distance, and as a thirsty person approaches near it, the illusion (mirage) disappears, leaving the thirsty completely exhausted, who ultimately dies of thirst. Similarly, a disbeliever's deeds are like a mirage which he considers of value and benefit, but in actual fact they are no better than an illusion, like mirage, and as a thirsty person discovers the illusion when it is too late, in the same way the disbelievers will find out their blunder in the Hereafter, when it will be of no avail.

The second category of deeds is that of atheists or infidels, for which the example of a deep ocean is given, which is completely dark. In the first place it is dark because of its depth, then it is covered by a big wave which is also enshrouded by another wave, and over that there is a mass of dark cloud. In short there is darkness over darkness, so much so that if someone takes out his hand, he cannot have even a glimpse of it. The inference to be drawn from this example is that those infidels who deny the coming of the Dooms Day, the Reckoning and the Hereafter are devoid of even the illusive Nūr, which the first category of disbelievers had. Although they too did not possess the useful Nūr of guidance, but at least they were under the illusion that they had done some good deeds which will help them in the Hereafter, but the latter category did not deem it necessary to work for the Hereafter, since they had no belief in it. Hence, they will have nothing but darkness and complete darkness with them on the Dooms Day.

After describing the two examples the next sentence says: وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ نُوْرًا فَمَالَهٗ مِنْ نُّوْرٍ (And the one to whom Allah does not give light can have no light at all - 40).

This sentence about the disbelievers is like the one that appeared earlier for the believers: يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُوْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ (Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills - 35). It describes the deprivation of disbelievers from the Nūr of guidance, which they lost by denying the injunctions of Allah, and when they have lost Allah's Nūr of guidance how can they get any other Nūr.

This verse also explains that no one can become a perspicacious

scholar merely by having resource of insight and knowledge, rather it is bestowed by the grace of Allah only. It is for this reason that those who are regarded naïve in mundane matters prove themselves very knowledgeable and scholarly in the cognizance of the Hereafter. And, vice versa, many who are regarded very intelligent and knowledgeable in worldly matters, prove themselves completely ignorant and foolish in the perception and comprehension of the Hereafter. (Maẓharī)

Verses 41 - 45

اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ صٰٓفّٰتٍ ؕ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهٗ وَتَسْبِيْحَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٤٢﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُزْجِىْ سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهٗ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهٗ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيْهَا مِنْۢ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهٗ عَنْ مَّنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهٖ يَذْهَبُ بِالْاَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ يُقَلِّبُ اللّٰهُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّاُولِى الْاَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِىْ عَلٰى بَطْنِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِىْ عَلٰى رِجْلَيْنِ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِىْ عَلٰٓى اَرْبَعٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

Did you not realize that purity of Allah is proclaimed by all those in the heavens and the earth, and by the birds with their wings spread out? Everyone knows one's own (way of) praying (to Allah) and one's own (way of) proclaiming Allah's purity. And Allah knows well what they do. [41] **And to Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and towards Allah is the final return.** [42]

Do you not realize that Allah drives the clouds, then

joins them together, then turns them into a heap? Then you see the rain coming out from their midst. And He sends down from the sky *mountains* (of clouds) having hail in them, then He afflicts with it whomsoever He wills and turns it away from whomsoever He wills. The flash of its lightning seems to snatch away the eyes. [43] **Allah alternates the night and the day. Surely, in that there is a lesson for those who have eyes to see.** [44]

And Allah has created every moving creature from water. So, some of them move on their bellies; and some of them move on two legs and some of them move on four. Allah creates what He wills. Surely, Allah is powerful over everything. [45]

Commentary

'كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ' (Everyone knows one's own (way of) praying - 41). In the beginning of the verse it is said that every creature on earth and heavens and in between them is busy in the glorification and sanctification of Allah Ta'ālā. The meaning of Tasbīḥ is explained by Sufyān رحمه الله تعالى that Allah Ta'ālā has created every thing in this universe like earth, heavens, sun, moon, stars, water, fire, air or sand with purpose, and they are all performing all the time the task they are assigned. They cannot refuse to perform their assigned job. This obedience and submission to carry out the assigned job is referred here as Tasbīḥ. Hence, their Tasbīḥ is by action and not by words. By their actions they are confirming that they are performing this worship because they believe Allah Ta'ālā to be Pure and Almighty.

Zamakhsharī and some other commentators have, on the other hand, elaborated that it is not improbable that Allah Ta'ālā has placed so much sense and understanding in everything that they do recognize their Creator and Master. And it is also not improbable that He has taught them some sort of speech, and some special Tasbīḥ and worship in which they keep themselves busy. There is an allusion towards this point in the last sentence 'كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ' (Every one knows one's own {way of} praying and proclaiming Allah's purity - 41). It indicates that all creatures are busy in Tasbīḥ and worship of Allah Ta'ālā, but the manner of worship of each creature is different. Angels worship in a different manner, humans worship differently, trees and vegetation also worship differently, and

the rocks and minerals yet in another manner. Another verse of the Holy Qur'ān also confirms this view when it says اَعۡطٰى كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ خَلۡقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰى (He who gave everything its shape, then guidance - 20:50) that is 'Allah Ta'ālā created everything and then given guidance to them'. The guidance is that everything is obeying Allah and performing its assigned duty diligently. Apart from this, everything has been guided how to fulfill the need of its existence with such perfection that even the best of minds get boggled. How creative and complicated nests and holes they make for their living, and how they strive and work hard to find and collect their food is in itself a great wonder.

مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنۡ جِبَالٍ فِيۡهَا

From the sky mountains (of clouds) having hail in them - 43.

Here the word سَمَاء is purported for clouds, and Jibāl (mountains) for big masses of clouds, while hails are called Barad.

Verses 46 - 54

لَقَدۡ اَنۡزَلۡنَاۤ اٰيٰتٍ مُّبَيِّنٰتٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَهۡدِىۡ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِيۡمٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيَقُوۡلُوۡنَ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَبِالرَّسُوۡلِ وَاَطَعۡنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلّٰى فَرِيۡقٌ مِّنۡهُمۡ مِّنۡۢ بَعۡدِ ذٰلِكَ ؕ وَمَاۤ اُولٰٓئِكَ بِالۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاِذَا دُعُوۡۤا اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوۡلِهٖ لِيَحۡكُمَ بَيۡنَهُمۡ اِذَا فَرِيۡقٌ مِّنۡهُمۡ مُّعۡرِضُوۡنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنۡ يَّكُنۡ لَّهُمُ الۡحَقُّ يَاۡتُوۡۤا اِلَيۡهِ مُذۡعِنِيۡنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ اَفِىۡ قُلُوۡبِهِمۡ مَّرَضٌ اَمِ ارۡتَابُوۡۤا اَمۡ يَخَافُوۡنَ اَنۡ يَّحِيۡفَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَرَسُوۡلُهٗ ؕ بَلۡ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوۡلَ الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ اِذَا دُعُوۡۤا اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوۡلِهٖ لِيَحۡكُمَ بَيۡنَهُمۡ اَنۡ يَّقُوۡلُوۡا سَمِعۡنَا وَاَطَعۡنَا ؕ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الۡمُفۡلِحُوۡنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنۡ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوۡلَهٗ وَيَخۡشَ اللّٰهَ وَيَتَّقۡهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الۡفَآئِزُوۡنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاَقۡسَمُوۡا بِاللّٰهِ جَهۡدَ اَيۡمَانِهِمۡ لَئِنۡ اَمَرۡتَهُمۡ لَيَخۡرُجُنَّ ؕ قُلۡ لَّا تُقۡسِمُوۡا ۚ طَاعَةٌ مَّعۡرُوۡفَةٌ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيۡرٌۢ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلۡ

اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ ۚ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَّا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَاِنْ تُطِيْعُوْهُ تَهْتَدُوْا ؕ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُوْلِ اِلاَّ الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٥٤﴾

We have surely sent down enlightening verses. And Allah guides whom He wills to the straight path. [46]

And they say, 'We have believed in Allah and in the messenger and have taken to obedience', then a group from them goes back after all this. And those are no believers. [47] **And when they are summoned to Allah and His messenger that he (the messenger) may judge between them, in no time a group of them turns averse.** [48] **And if the right is theirs, they would come to him as (if they are) submissive ones.** [49] **Is there a malady in their hearts or do they have doubt or do they fear that Allah and His messenger will do injustice to them? Rather they themselves are the unjust.** [50] **The only reply of the (true) believers, when they are summoned to Allah and His messenger that he (the messenger) may judge between them, is that they say, 'We listen and obey.' And such people are the successful.** [51] **And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger and has awe of Him and observes Taqwā of Him, then such people are the victorious.** [52]

And they (the hypocrites) swear by Allah on eloquent oaths that if you (O prophet) order them, they will certainly leave (their homes for Jihād). Say, 'do not swear, (the reality of your) obedience is known. Indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do.' [53]

Say, 'Obey Allah and obey the messenger. But if you turn away, then on him (the messenger) lies (the responsibility of) what he is burdened with and on you lies (the responsibility of) what you are burdened with. And if you obey him, you will get the right path. And the messenger is responsible for nothing more than to convey the message clearly.' [54]

Commentary

These verses were revealed on a special occasion. Ṭabari and others

have related the incident saying that there was a hypocrite by the name Bishr, who had some dispute and enmity with a Jew over a piece of land. The Jew suggested to him to take their dispute before the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the judgement, but Bishr, the hypocrite knew well that he was on the wrong and if the dispute was taken to the Holy Prophet ﷺ he will definitely decide the case on merit, and he will lose the case. So, he did not agree with the suggestion and instead asked the Jew to take it to Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, another Jew. On this point these verses were revealed. In verse أَفِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ (Is there any malady in their hearts - 50) the disease of firm infidelity or the doubt on prophethood have been negated to point out that this doubt and infidelity were not the real cause of evasion to take the dispute in the court of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . Although the infidelity and doubt on prophethood among the hypocrites is obvious and proven, but the underlying cause was that he (Bishr) knew well that if the case was placed before the Holy Prophet ﷺ , he would definitely lose it, because he would decide the case on merit.

Four conditions for success and victory

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَيَخْشَ اللّٰهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُوْنَ

> And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger and has awe of Him and observes Taqwā of Him, then such people are the victorious. [52]

In this verse it is declared that those who bind themselves to follow these four things are the ones who are successful and victorious in this world and the Hereafter.

An astonishing incident

An incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ is reported in Tafsīr Qurṭubī, which explains the difference between these four things and puts them in right perspective. It so happened that one day Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ was standing in the Prophet's ﷺ mosque, when suddenly a Roman villager appeared and stood beside him, and said انا اشهد ان لآ اله الاّ اللّٰه واشهد انّ محمدًا رسول اللّٰه. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ inquired 'What is the matter?' He replied 'I have accepted Islam for Allah's sake'. Then Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked if there was any reason for that, to which he replied in the affirmative, and elaborated that he had read Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and a number of other books brought by past messengers. But lately he had heard a verse of the Holy Qur'ān recited by a Muslim prisoner and realized that in that small

verse all the older books have been condensed. So, he was convinced that it was Allah's revelation. Then Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ enquired from him about the verse he was referring to, and he recited this very verse. That Roman villager also gave a very astonishing commentary of the verse, which goes like this:

مَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَيَخْشَ اللّٰهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُوْنَ

> And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger and has awe of Him and observes Taqwā of Him, then such people are the victorious. [52]

This مَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ relates to the obligations toward Allah, and 'وَرَسُوْلَهٗ refers to Prophet's ﷺ traditions, and وَيَخْشَ اللّٰهَ alludes toward past life and وَيَتَّقْهِ is purported for the remaining life. When someone acts upon these four things he is given the good tiding of فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُوْنَ (that such people are the victorious). And Fa'iz is that person who gets deliverance from Jahannam and earns a place in the Paradise. After hearing this explanation Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ said the endorsement of this is available in the utterance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who had said اوتيت جوامع الكلم that is ' Allah has graced me with such comprehensive expressions in which words are few but the meanings are vast'. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 55 - 57

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِيْنَهُمُ الَّذِى ارْتَضٰى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ اَمْنًا ۭ يَعْبُدُوْنَنِىْ لَا يُشْرِكُوْنَ بِىْ شَيْئًا ۭ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَمَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ ۭ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٥٧﴾

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them (His)

vicegerents in the land, like He made those before them, and will certainly establish for them their religion that He has chosen for them and will certainly give them peace in exchange, after their state of fear; (provided that) they worship Me, ascribing no partner to Me. And whoever turns infidel after that, then such people are the transgressors. [55]

And establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh and obey the messenger so that you may be favored with mercy. [56] **Never think that the disbelievers are (able) to frustrate (Allah's plan) on the earth. And their abode is the Fire. And indeed it is an evil terminus.** [57]

Commentary

Background of Revelation

Qurṭubī has reported on authority of Abul 'Āliyah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed in Makkah for ten years after commencement of revelation and declaration of prophethood, during which time there was a constant fear of the infidels and disbelievers. Then after the Hijrah to Madina also there was a ceaseless danger of attacks from the disbelievers. So, someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ "Would a time come to us when we will be able to live in peace without wearing our weaponry?' The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied 'Yes, the time is coming very soon'. On that occasion these verses were revealed. (Qurṭubī and Baḥr). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that these verses relate the promise of Allah Ta'ālā, which He had made with the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ before their creation in the Torah and the Injīl. (Baḥr Muḥīṭ)

Allah Ta'ālā had made three promises to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that his Ummah will be made His vicegerent on earth and will rule over it, and His favourite religion Islam will be made victorious, and Muslims will be given so much power and grandeur that they will have no fear of any one. Allah Ta'ālā fulfilled His promise by conferring conquest over Makkah, Khaibar, Baḥrain, and the whole of Yemen and the entire peninsula of Arabia even during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Also he received *jizyah*, (capitation tax) from the Zoroastrians of Hajar and some Syrian territories. The kings and rulers of Rome, Egypt, Iskandria, Oman and Ethiopia sent gifts to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and gave him honour and respect. Then during his caliphate Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ

crushed all the menacing uprisings. He also sent out Islamic armies to Persia, Syria and Egypt. Buṣrā and Damascus also fell to Islamic State during this time.

When the time of death of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ approached nearer, Allah Ta'ālā put an inspiration in his heart to nominate Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ as his successor. When Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ took charge of the caliphate, it was so wonderful that the heavens had not witnessed such grand governance after the governance of the messengers. During his caliphate the entire land of Syria and Egypt and major part of Persia were overpowered. It was during his time that the grandeur of Caesar and Chosroes were vanished. After that period, during the caliphate of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ the Islamic victories extended from the East to the West. In the west up to Cyprus and Andalucia, and in the east up to China. Besides, 'Irāq, Khorasan and Ahwaz all fell to Islamic State during the time of third Caliph. What the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said according to a Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth that he was shown the entire east and west of the earth by bringing them together, and that the rule of his Ummah will extend up to all those places which have been shown to him; this promise was fulfilled by Allah Ta'ālā even during the time of caliphate Sayyidna 'Uthman . (Ibn Kathīr)

According to another *ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that caliphate will last for thirty years after him. Here, the word caliphate means the Rightly Guided Caliphate (Al-Khilāfah-ar-Rāshidah), which was run exactly on the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . It lasted up to the time of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ, because this period of thirty years was finished after him.

At this point Ibn Kathīr has also reported a *ḥadīth* from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that Sayyidnā Jabir Ibn Samurah ﷺ has said that he had heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying that his Ummah will continue ruling until the twelve caliphs last. After narrating this Ibn Kathīr has commented that this *ḥadīth* is pointing that there will be twelve upright caliphs in the Muslim Ummah, which is bound to happen. However, it is not necessary that all twelve come one after the other and there is no gap in between, rather it is more likely that they turn up with an interval of time. Out of this lot, four Rightly Guided Khulafā' had appeared one after the other immediately after the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The next was Sayyidnā

'Umar Ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ﷺ who came after a gap of some time. A few others also appeared in different times after him and will continue to come until the last caliph Sayyidnā Mahdiyy comes. There is no mention in the *ḥadīth* of those twelve caliphs which the Shiites have determined. Rather some of them are those who have no connection with the caliphate at all. It is also not necessary that all of them would be of the same status, and during their time there would be complete peace and tranquility. This promise is related to rectitude and firmness of faith, the righteous deeds and total obedience, and any difference in their degree will naturally make difference in the power and control of authority. Islamic history spread over a period of 1400 years is a witness that in different times and different countries whenever and wherever there was a just and righteous ruler, he has received his share from this promise of Allah based on the extent of righteous deeds he has performed. At another place, the Qur'ān says إنَّ حِزْبَ اللهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُوْنَ that is 'The people of Allah are the ones to prevail.'

This verse is a proof of approval and esteem in the sight of Allah of the four rightly guided Khulafā'

This verse is also a proof of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because the forecast he had made came true exactly in the manner he had predicted. The same way it is also a proof of acceptance and approval of the caliphate of Al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn in the sight of Allah. It is for the simple reason that the promise Allah Ta'ālā had made with His Messenger ﷺ and his Ummah was completely fulfilled during the lifetime of the four Ṣaḥābah. If the caliphate of the earlier caliphs is not regarded legitimate and true, as claimed by some Rawāfiḍ, then the Qur'ānic promise has not been fulfilled as yet. Then the argument put forward by Rawāfiḍ that the Qur'ānic promise will be fulfilled during the life of Sayyidnā Mahdiyy is but ridiculous, as it will amount to saying that for full 1400 years the 'Ummah will live in disgrace and misery, and nearing the Dooms Day when he will get the rule, only that period is referred by this promise. The fact of the matter is that the conditions of faith and righteous deeds, on which this promise was made by Allah Ta'ālā, were present in these Ṣaḥābah to the perfection and in totality. In reality Allah's promise was fulfilled in totality in their lifetime only. After that neither the degree of faith and deeds was maintained at that level, nor

the dignity of caliphate and governance could be retained.

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ

And whoever turns infidel after that, then such people are the transgressors - 24:55.

The literal meaning of the word Kufr is thanklessness and in conventional sense it is the antonym of faith. In this verse there is room for taking either of the two meanings. Thus the meaning of the verse is that when Allah Ta'ālā fulfills His promise and bestows power, authority, peace and satisfaction to the Muslims, and stability to Islam, and after that someone turns apostate or avoids obeying the rules of the Islamic State, then such a person is a transgressor. In the first place he has lost the faith, and secondly, stopped obeying the rules and regulations of the Islamic State. Kufr and ingratitude are great sins in any situation, but after the establishment of Islamic rule, authority and grandeur the intensity of these sins is doubled. That is why it is emphasized by the words بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ (after that). Imām Baghawī has said that the scholars of Tafsīr have explained that this Qur'ānic sentence came true for the first time on those who assassinated the ruling caliph Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ. When they committed this great sin, the referred graces of Allah Ta'ālā were reduced, and they were afflicted with fear and fright because of mutual killings and massacre. Despite the fact that they were like brothers to each other, they got involved in mutual killing. Baghawī has related on his own authority an address by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ, which he delivered at the time of commotion against Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ. The wordings of the address are as follows:

> "The angels of Allah had cordoned your city for security ever since the Holy Prophet ﷺ had come to Madīnah, and this measure was continuing until today. By God, if you assassinate 'Uthmān ؓ, these angels will go back, and will never return again. By god, whoever from you will kill him will present himself before Allah with his hands cut. He will be without his hands. And know that Allah's sword was in its sheath so far. By God, if this sword comes out of its sheath, it shall never go back in sheath again, because whenever a messenger is assassinated, seventy thousand people are killed in return and when a caliph is assassinated, then thirty five thousand persons are killed" (Maẓharī).

Hence, the sequence of mutual killing which had commenced with the Shahadah (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ has continued in the Ummah throughout. Similarly, the way assassins of 'Uthmān ﷺ acted against the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā and solidarity of Islam and were ungrateful to Him, the Rawāfiḍ and Khawārij did the same after that by grouping against the Guided Khulafā'. The incident of great sacrifice of Sayyidnā Husain Ibn Ali ﷺ also happened under the same sequence. نسأل الله الهداية و شكر نعمته

Verses 58 - 60

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِيَسْتَاْذِنْكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ
يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلٰثَ مَرّٰتٍ ؕ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلٰوةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِيْنَ
تَضَعُوْنَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الظَّهِيْرَةِ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدِ صَلٰوةِ الْعِشَآءِ ۗ ثَلٰثُ
عَوْرٰتٍ لَّكُمْ ؕ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌۢ بَعْدَهُنَّ ؕ طَوّٰفُوْنَ
عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَاِذَا بَلَغَ الْاَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَاْذِنُوْا كَمَا
اسْتَاْذَنَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ الّٰتِيْ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ
عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ يَّضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجٰتٍۢ بِزِيْنَةٍ ؕ وَاَنْ
يَّسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُنَّ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

O those who believe, the slaves owned by you and those of you who have not reached puberty must seek your permission (to see you) at three times: before the prayer of Fajr, when you take off your clothes at noon and after the prayer of 'Ishā'. These are three times of privacy for you. There is no harm, neither to you nor to them after these (three times). They are your frequent visitors as some of you are (frequent visitors) of the others. This is how Allah explains the verses to you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [58]

And when the children from among you reach puberty, they must seek permission as the permission is sought by those before them. This is how Allah explains His verses to you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [59]

And those old women who have no hope for marriage, there is no sin on them if they take off their (extra) clothes while they do not display their adornment. And that they refrain (even from this) is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [60]

Commentary

It has been described in the beginning of this Sūrah that the injunctions of Sūrah Nūr mostly relate to prevention of obscenity and vulgarity. Under the same sequence some injunctions regarding social etiquette and mutual meetings are also enjoined. After that the injunctions about Ḥijāb for women are prescribed.

The injunction for relatives and *maḥrams* for seeking permission at specific timings

Earlier in this Sūrah the social etiquette and manners for mutual meetings were described in verses 27, 28 and 29 under the heading 'injunctions on seeking permission', where it was enjoined that if you go to visit someone, do not enter the house without taking permission. Irrespective of the situation whether it is a female section of the house or the male section, and whether the visitor is a man or a woman, it has been made obligatory on every one to seek permission before entering the house. However, these injunctions relate to those who come in the house as visitors. But in the present verses a different type of *isti'dhān* is enjoined. Here those persons are instructed to seek permission who live together in the same house and keep roaming in the rooms freely. In this category those men are also included with whom the *ḥijāb* of women is not required (the maḥrams). They, too, are advised to make some sort of sound, either by cleaning the throat or by thumping of steps, in order to make their presence felt. This type of *isti'dhān* is preferable and not obligatory, but to give it up is Makrūh Tanzīhī. Tafsīr Maẓharī has remarked:

فمن اراد الدخول فی بیت نفسه وفیه محرماته یکره له الدخول فیه من غیر استیذان تنزیها لاحتمال رؤیة واحدة منهن عریانة وهو احتمال ضعیف ومقتضاه التنزه. (مظهری)

> The one who intends to enter his own house, while it is occupied by his maḥram ladies, it is not desirable (*makrūh tanzīhī*) for him to enter it without seeking permission, because of the possibility that one of those ladies is without clothes. However, since this possibility is a remote one, it requires precaution only (and not Prohibition).

This injunction relates to the time before entering the house, but once men-folk have entered the house, all the inmates live together and being members of the same family keep meeting each other within the house. For the family members living together there is another injunction of seeking permission at three specific times, which are the times of privacy. These three times are before the Fajr prayers, the resting time in the afternoon and in the night after 'Ishā' prayers. At these times all the *maḥrams* and relatives, even the young children and slave girls having sense, are prohibited to enter the private places without taking permission. It is to ensure that none should go in the private rooms without first seeking the permission. At these times one wants to be on one's own and sometimes takes off the extra clothes, while at times one is in a compromising position with his wife. During any of these situations one would feel very embarrassed and upset if seen by even a very young but sensible child or a woman of the household. In the least it will cause him disturbance in his rest. Hence, there is a need to take permission at these three specific times before entering the private chambers. After this injunction it is said لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَ هُنَّ (58) that is besides these times there is no harm if you go to each other without any permission, because during all other times people are busy doing their normal duties and are properly attired in their usual clothing. These are also not the normal times for intimacy with the wife.

Here the question arises that enforcement of injunction on adult man and woman is normal, but why the young children are also commanded to comply with this injunction, which is not the normal practice.

The answer to this confusion is that in actual fact it is the adult men and women who are charged with this duty to explain to the young children not to go to private chambers at these times without taking permission. It is in the same manner as a *ḥadīth* instructs to teach the prayers to children when they attain the age of seven years and persuade them to offer it. And when they attain the age of ten years they be bound

down to offer prayers regularly, and if they default then they should be beaten to be regular in their prayers. Similarly, the injunction of *isti'dhān* in the above verse is actually for the adult men and women. In the sentence under discussion the word Junāḥ is used to say that apart from these three times there is no harm if the inmates go in the private chambers without permission. Generally the word Junāḥ is used for sin, but sometimes it is also used for harm or obstacle. Here in this verse it is used for the latter meaning, hence, any doubt of sinning on the part of children is also removed. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Ruling

The phrase الَّذِيْنَ مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ (the slaves owned by you) used in verse (58) covers the meaning of both the slaves and the slave girls. Among them the adult slaves fall under the category of non-Maḥrams under the Islamic law. As has been explained earlier, the mistress owner woman of an adult slave is obligated to be in ḥijāb before him. Therefore, the phrase is purported to mean here the slave girls and minor slaves who roam about in the house freely.

Ruling

The scholars and jurists have different viewpoints on the question whether this type of *isti'dhān* is obligatory or merely commendable and whether this injunction is still valid or is abrogated. Majority of jurists have ruled that this verse is firm and thus not abrogated, and the injunction is obligatory both for men and women (Qurṭubī). But it is obvious that the reason and ground for the injunction to be obligatory is that which is given above, that is, one wants to be on his own at these three times and likes privacy, and sometimes gets busy with his wife. However, if people could get into the habit of keeping their concealable parts covered even at these three times, and be careful to copulate with wife only at times when there is no possibility of any one coming in, as is the norm these days, then it is not obligatory to restrain the relatives and children from entering without *isti'dhān*. In this situation it is no more obligatory for the relatives to follow it. But there is no doubt that it is a desirable and commendable act, though it seems that people have given it up for a long time. According to one narration Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has used very strong words for ignoring it, and according to another narration he has put forward excuses for those who do not follow it.

The first narration is reported by Ibn Kathīr on authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that there are three verses which people have stopped following. One of them is this very verse of *istidhān* يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِيَسْتَاْذِنْكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ (58) in which relatives and young children are instructed to seek permission. The second verse is وَاِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ اُولُوا الْقُرْبٰى (4:8) in which people are advised to hand over a part of the inheritance to those relatives also who are present at the time of division of patrimony but have no claim on it, in order to console them. The third verse is اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰكُمْ in which it is declared that the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most god-fearing of you. But these days such persons are regarded honorable and respectable who possess plenty of wealth and palatial houses. According to some other narration Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has also said that in respect of these three verses the Satan has overpowered the people. Then he said "I have restrained even my slave girl not to come to me without permission at these three times".

The second narration is also reported on authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim by Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah ﷺ that two persons enquired from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ about *isti'dhān* enjoined (by this verse) upon near relatives and commented that people have stopped acting on this. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ replied إنّ الله ستير يحبّ السّتر that Allah keeps cover on many things, and He likes the same for others. The fact of the matter is that at the time of revelation of this verse the society was very simple. People did not use curtains at the door nor did they have large beds with curtains. There used to be occasions when a child or servant would come in unannounced at a time the person was in a compromising position with his wife. It was to prevent such happenings that Allah Ta'ālā sent down this injunction to take permission at these three times. But now people use curtains at the door and large beds having curtains, which is considered enough for the purpose. Now there is no need for *isti'dhān*. (Having reproduced this narration Ibn Kathīr has said – هذا اسناد صحيح الى ابن عباس (that is, the chain of its narrators is 'Ṣaḥīḥ' i.e. authentic). In the light of this narration ascribed to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ one thing is quite clear that when there is no apprehension of any one seeing the other in an uncovered position or involved with his wife, in that case some concession is allowed.

But Qur'an teaches for a pure society so that no one interferes in

anyone's freedom and everybody lives in peace and comfort. Those who do not make their family members follow the practice of seeking permission they themselves face inconvenience and curb their natural instincts and desires.

Emphasis on *ḥijāb* for women and an exemption

The injunction on *ḥijab* for women has already appeared earlier in detail in two verses, and two exemptions were also mentioned there. One exemption relates to the one who is seeing, and the other to that who is seen. According to the first exemption, young children and the slave girls are exempt. As for the second exemption, the outward adornment is exempt from ḥijāb, which includes outer clothing like veil or covering sheet. There is agreement of all on this, but according to some, women's face and palms are also included in this exemption

In the next verse the third exemption is granted on the basis of a woman's personal situation. If a woman has grown so old that no one would have any (sexual) desire towards her, nor is she marriageable, for such a woman concession in *ḥijāb* is allowed in that even strangers (non-Maḥrams) are treated like *maḥrams* for her. She is not required to cover those parts of her body before non-Maḥrams which are not required to be covered before *maḥrams*. Hence, it is said وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ الّٰتِیْ (And those old women who have no hope for marriage - 60). The explanation of this verse is already given above. Although very old women are allowed to uncover those parts of their body before non-Maḥrams which are not required to be covered before mahrams, yet this exemption is allowed with the condition that they do so without applying any makeup or adornment. The other thing said in the last is وَاَنْ یَّسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَیْرٌ لَّهُنَّ (60) that is, it is better for them if they avoid going before non-Maḥrams altogether.

Verse 61

لَیْسَ عَلَی الْاَعْمٰی حَرَجٌ وَّلَا عَلَی الْاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَّلَا عَلَی الْمَرِیْضِ
حَرَجٌ وَّلَا عَلٰٓی اَنْفُسِکُمْ اَنْ تَاْکُلُوْا مِنْ بُیُوْتِکُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اٰبَآئِکُمْ
اَوْبُیُوْتِ اُمَّهٰتِکُمْ اَوْبُیُوْتِ اِخْوَانِکُمْ اَوْبُیُوْتِ اَخَوٰتِکُمْ اَوْبُیُوْتِ
اَعْمَامِکُمْ اَوْبُیُوْتِ عَمّٰتِکُمْ اَوْبُیُوْتِ اَخْوَالِکُمْ اَوْبُیُوْتِ خٰلٰتِکُمْ

اَوْمَا مَلَكْتُمْ مَّفَاتِحَهٗٓ اَوْصَدِيْقِكُمْ ؕ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَاْكُلُوْا جَمِيْعًا اَوْ اَشْتَاتًا ؕ فَاِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوْتًا فَسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ مُبٰرَكَةً طَيِّبَةً ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾

There is no blame on a blind person, nor is there any blame on any lame one, nor is there any blame on a patient, nor on yourselves in that you eat (something) from your own homes or from the homes of your fathers or the homes of your mothers or the homes of your brothers or the homes of your sisters or the homes of your paternal aunts or the homes of your maternal uncles or the homes of your maternal aunts or from the places the keys of which you have under your control or from (the home of) your friend. There is no sin on you if you eat together or separately. So when you enter homes, greet your own selves with Salām, a greeting prescribed by Allah which is blessed, pleasant. This is how Allah explains the verses to you so that you may understand. [61]

Commentary

Some injunctions and social etiquettes after the entry in the house

In the previous verses it was enjoined to seek permission before entering into anyone's house. In the above verse those injunctions and etiquettes are pronounced which are obligatory or preferable to follow after the permission to enter the house is granted. Before understanding the injunction contained in this verse and its purport it would be advisable to know the background in which this verse was revealed.

Every Muslim knows very well how much emphasis is laid by the Holy Qur'ān and the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for respecting and preserving the rights of the people (Ḥuqūq ul-'Ibād). Very strong warnings are sounded against using anything owned by someone else without his permission. On the other hand Allah Ta'ālā had chosen such fortunate persons for the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they were all ears for any command from Allah or His Messenger. They were always

ready to put in their best on every single command. By following Qur'ānic teachings diligently and having the exalted company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ they were turned by Allah Ta'ālā into a group of whom even the angels were proud. Not to think ever to spend even slightly from other's wealth, to avoid putting in anyone into the slightest of trouble and to remain steadfast on the highest standard of Taqwā (constant awareness of Allah) were only some of the attributes of the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Some related incidents had taken place during the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, in which connection the injunctions contained in the present verse were revealed. All commentators have made reference of these incidents with the difference that different incidents are quoted as the cause of revelation by different commentators. The actual position is that there is no contradiction in their assertions, and all these incidents put together are the cause of revelation of this verse. The incidents are as follows:

Imām Baghawī ﷺ has related on authority of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رحمه الله تعالیٰ and some other commentators that it is a common habit among people to feel disgust in eating together with lame, cripple, blind and sick, and avoid it. Among the companions who had any of these disability thought that if they were to eat with others they might cause botheration and trouble to them. Therefore, they started avoiding to eat with normal persons. The blind people thought that they might eat more than others, as they cannot see, causing injustice for the rest. Justice requires that all who eat together should eat equally. Likewise, the lame thought that they would create problem for others as they could not sit properly and occupy more space, which will result in taking up the share of space of others. In this background, the above verse was revealed in which the disabled were asked to join other normal persons for eating. They were advised not to take upon themselves such painstaking precautionary measures which could lead them into trouble.

Imam Baghawī has narrated another incident related by Ibn Jarīr on authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ which presents the other side of the picture. The story goes like this; when the verse لَا تَاْكُلُوْٓا اَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ (Do not eat up each other's property by false means - 2:188) was revealed, people were hesitant to eat with the blind, lame and the sick. Their consideration was that the sick eats less because of his indisposition, so he

would suffer if he eats with others. The blind cannot differentiate between the good and ordinary food, and the lame is slow to eat because of his posture. So, people thought there is a possibility that the disabled are deprived of their due share, whereas the justice demands that all should eat equally while eating together. So, it was in this background that this verse was revealed, and people were taken out of this predicament. The spirit behind this injunction is that people should eat together and if there is a little disparity in the quantity of food taken by each one of them, it should not be a cause of botheration.

Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyab رحمه الله تعالى has given yet another version that while going on *jihād* or battles, the Muslims used to hand over the keys of their houses to the disabled with the instructions that they can eat whatever is there in the house. On the other hand, the disabled would not eat anything, lest they spend something against the wishes of the owners. Hence, to counter this position, the above verse was revealed. Musnad al-Bazzār has also reported this version on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to go on a battle, it was the desire of every companion to go along with him to participate in the battle. They used to hand over the keys of their houses to the poor and disabled persons with the permission that they could eat anything available in the house during their absence. But the disabled would abstain from taking anything from the house fearing that the permission given to them to eat freely from the house might not have been given with full willingness. Baghawī has also narrated on authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضی الله عنه that the word صَدِيقِكُمْ (your friend) used in the verse, which means that there is no harm in eating from your friend's house, was a reference toward the incident of Ḥārith b. 'Amr رضی الله عنه. The incident was that Ḥārith b. 'Amr رضی الله عنه went for *jihād* along with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, leaving the care and custody of his house to his friend, Mālik Ibn Zaid رضی الله عنه. When Ḥārith رضی الله عنه returned, he noticed that Mālik Ibn Zaid رضی الله عنه had become very weak. When he enquired the reason of the weakness, Mālik رضی الله عنه replied that he did not feel it right to eat anything from his house. (All these narrations are taken from Tafsīr Maẓharī). Indeed all these incidents had a bearing on the revelation of this verse.

Ruling

As mentioned above, a general permission was granted in this verse to

eat in certain houses without asking special consent. This permission was granted on the basis of a tradition among 'Arabs to eat freely in the houses of close relatives. There was absolutely no formality among them, and no one would ever mind this habit, rather they used to encourage it and would feel happy about it. Not only that, sometimes the relatives used to bring poor, sick or needy persons and feed them at houses of others, on which the hosts would feel happy. According to custom they would not seek special permission for this, as there was a general consent among them to follow the tradition. It therefore becomes obvious that wherever and whenever this tradition is not in vogue, or the owner's consent is doubtful, then eating without permission is forbidden. In the present time no one would like that even a close relative would eat in his house without seeking permission. Therefore, the permission granted in this verse would not apply, unless some one is absolutely sure that his eating in a relative's house would not cause any problem or displeasure, rather he would enjoy it. Only in this situation eating at such a house would be permissible under the dictate of this verse.

Ruling

It is now clear from the above statement that it is not right to say that this injunction was meant for the early days of Islam, and was abrogated later. The injunction is in force right from the beginning up to the date and shall always remain effective. The real condition of the application of this injunction is the certainty of permission of the owner of the house, and if that is not present, then the very basis of injunction is not available. (Maẓharī).

Ruling

It has also now become clear that this injunction is not restricted only to the relatives specified in the verse, but the concession is applicable to other persons also, with the sole condition that it is certain that the owner of the house will be pleased and will not be offended if someone eats and also makes others eat without seeking prior permission. (Maẓharī) These injunctions relate to the acts permitted or preferable on entering in someone's house after taking permission. The act of eating and drinking has been mentioned first due to its importance. The second act (mentioned in verse 64) relates to the etiquettes of entry.

The etiquette demands that as one enters the house with permission,

he should greet all the Muslims present there with salām. This is the purport of the words "greet your own selves", (verse 61). It is because all Muslims are a single united group. In many Ṣaḥīḥ Ahadis great emphasis is laid on Muslims for greeting each other as an act of virtue.

Verses 62 - 64

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَاِذَا كَانُوْا مَعَهٗ عَلٰٓى اَمْرٍ
جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوْا حَتّٰى يَسْتَاْذِنُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَاْذِنُوْنَكَ اُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ فَاِذَا اسْتَاْذَنُوْكَ لِبَعْضِ شَاْنِهِمْ فَاْذَنْ
لِّمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَا
تَجْعَلُوْا دُعَآءَ الرَّسُوْلِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا ؕ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْنَ يَتَسَلَّلُوْنَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۚ فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِيْنَ يُخَالِفُوْنَ عَنْ اَمْرِهٖٓ اَنْ
تُصِيْبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ اَوْ يُصِيْبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِى
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ ؕ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ
فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His messenger and who, when they are with him for a collective matter, do not leave unless they seek his permission. Surely, those who seek your permission are the ones who believe in Allah and His messenger. So, if they seek permission from you for some business of theirs, give permission to whom you wish from among them, and pray to Allah for their forgiveness. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [62]

Do not take the call of the messenger among you as a call of one of you to another. Allah definitely knows those of you who sneak out, covering one another. So, those who violate his (messenger's) order must beware, lest they are visited by a trial or they are visited by a painful punishment. [63]

Remember! To Allah belongs all that is there in the

heavens and the earth. He knows the condition you are in; and the Day on which they will be returned to Him, He will tell them what they did. And Allah is fully aware of everything. [64]

Commentary

Some etiquettes and injunctions in regard to meetings with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in particular, and in the society in general

The above verses contain two injunctions. The first injunction is that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ call people for the meeting in connection with *jihād* or any other religious matter, the demand of the faith is that all should attend and must not leave the meeting without his permission. If there is an emergency, permission may be sought from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who was advised that unless there is special need and requirement, permission may be granted on such requests. In the same connection those hypocrites are condemned who would come to attend the meeting only to fulfill the obligation of faith, but would quietly sneak out under the cover of some other person.

This verse was revealed at the time of the battle of Aḥzāb, when the Arab disbelievers and other groups joined together and suddenly attacked Madīnah. After consultations with the companions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ consented to dig up a trench to defend against the attack. For this reason this battle is also known as 'the battle of trench (Khandaq)'. This battle was fought in Shawwal 5th Hijra. (Qurṭubī)

Baihaqī and Ibn Isḥāq have reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself had taken part in the digging of the trench. But the hypocrites used to come late in the first place, and after doing a little bit of work just to show their presence, would sneak away quietly. As against this all the believers were putting in their best, and in case of any need or emergency would take permission from the Holy Prophet ﷺ before leaving the work. At that point this verse was revealed. (Maẓharī)

A question and its answer

It appears from this verse that it is forbidden to get up and leave from the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ without seeking his permission. But there are several incidents when companions used to leave his meeting when they wished and would not deem it necessary to take his permission. The answer to this point is that the injunction mentioned in

the present verse is not an injunction for ordinary meetings, but it is meant for specific gatherings, which the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have called for some need, as was the case at the time of battle of the trench. The phrase عَلٰى اَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ (for a collective matter - 62) is itself pointing toward this exclusivity.

What does امرِ جَامِع (collective matter) mean?

There are different views on this point. The most evident explanation is that this phrase is used for such acts for which the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt necessary to collect the people, as he regarded it important to collect the people for digging the trench on the occasion of battle of Aḥzāb. (Qurṭubī – Maẓharī)

Is this injunction exclusive to meetings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or is general?

Since this injunction is issued for a religious and Islamic need, all the jurists agree that it is not exclusive to meetings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The same injunction would apply to any Imām or ruler of the Muslims who is in control of the government, if he called up a meeting. It is obligatory to attend the meetings called up by the rulers and it is not lawful to leave it without permission. (Qurṭubī – Maẓharī – Bayān ul-Qur'ān) This is but obvious that this injunction has greater stress and emphasis for meetings called up by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and its opposition is open callousness. As for the common meetings and gatherings (not convened by a ruler), acting upon this injunction is surely preferable and commendable from the point of view of Islamic social etiquette. When Muslims are gathered in a meeting for deliberation or action on a collective issue, one should leave the meeting only after taking permission from the presiding person.

The second injunction

The second injunction is given in the last verse:

لَاتَجْعَلُوْا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُوْلِ بَيْنَكُمْ

Do not take the call of the messenger among you as a call of one of you to another - 24:63.

One explanation of this verse is that "call of the messenger" means calling of the people by the Holy Prophet ﷺ (which implies that "call" is the act of the messenger). Thus the meaning of the verse is, when the

Holy Prophet ﷺ call people, it should not be taken as a common call of an ordinary person, in which one has the choice to go or not to go. In the case of a call by the Holy Prophet ﷺ it becomes obligatory to go to him and leaving the meeting without his permission is unlawful. In the context of the verse the above explanation appears more appropriate. That is why Maẓharī and Bayān ul-Qur'ān have adopted this explanation. The other explanation of "call of the messenger" is related by Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī on authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما. According to this explanation it means calling of the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the people for some need which implies that 'the messenger' is the object of the 'call'.

On the basis of this explanation the meaning of the verse would be that when you Call the Holy Prophet ﷺ for some need, do not call him by his name saying 'Yā Muḥammad یامحمد', as you call others. This is disrespect to him. Therefore, call him by an honorific form of address such as 'Yā Rasūl Allāh یا رسول الله or 'Yā Nabiyy Allāh' یا نبی الله. In the final analysis it is obligatory on all Muslims to have respect and veneration for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and to avoid all such things which are in conflict with respect and etiquette, or which may cause inconvenience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This injunction is similar in nature to many of those enjoined in Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, for instance لَاتَجْهَرُوْا لَهٗ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ (49:2) It means that when you talk to the Holy Prophet ﷺ keep in mind his respect, and do not talk in a loud voice, as people do while talking to each other. A similar example is اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُنَادُوْنَكَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ (49:4) which means that when he ﷺ is inside the house, one must not call him out, rather wait for him outside until he comes out on his own.

A Warning

It has also been inferred from the second explanation that as a common etiquette it is incumbent upon Muslims to pay respect to the elders, and to call them by their names is disrespect. Elders should always be called with titles of respect.

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah An-Nūr

Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Furqān

Sūrah Al-Furqān was revealed in Makkah and it contains 77 Verses and 6 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلٰى عَبْدِهٖ لِيَكُوْنَ لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ نَذِيْرًا ﴿١﴾
الَّذِىْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ
شَرِيْكٌ فِى الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهٗ تَقْدِيْرًا ﴿٢﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اٰلِهَةً لَّا يَخْلُقُوْنَ شَيْئًا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ
ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا وَّلَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مَوْتًا وَّلَا حَيٰوةً وَّلَا نُشُوْرًا ﴿٣﴾

Glorious is the One who has revealed the Criterion to His servant, so that he may be a warner to the worlds, [1] **the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and who did neither have a son, nor is there any partner to him in the kingdom, and who has created everything and designed it in a perfect measure.** [2]

And they have coined gods, other than Him, who do not create any thing, rather they themselves are created, and they possess no power to cause harm or benefit even to themselves, nor do they have any power over death or life or resurrection. [3]

Special features of the Sūrah

There is consensus among the commentators that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. However, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and Qatādah ﷺ

contend that three of its verses are Madanī and rest of the Sūrah is Makkan. Yet Qurṭubī and a few others maintain that the Sūrah itself is Madanī and only a few verses are Makkan.

The gist of the subject matter of the Sūrah is to describe and define the greatness of the Holy Qur'ān and the truth of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to which there were doubts expressed by the unbelievers. The Sūrah contains answers to their objections.

Commentary

تَبَارَكَ (25:1) is derived from بَرَكَة , meaning abundance of a good thing. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has explained that the meaning of the first verse is that all blessings are from Allah alone. فُرْقَان (Furqān, translated above as 'criterion')is a title of the Qur'ān and its meaning is to distinguish. The Holy Qur'ān by its very nature distinguishes between right and wrong, and differentiates, through miracles between the right people and the wrong ones, hence it is called as Furqān.

لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ (warner to the worlds - 25:1). This proves that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prophethood was for the entire universe and not just for a certain community or time, as was the case with other prophets. In a Ḥadīth recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has pointed out six special features about his prophethood. One of the special features is the universality of his prophethood i.e. it is for all ages and all people.

Special Wisdom in every creation

فَقَدَّرَهٗ تَقْدِيْرًا (And designed it in a perfect measure - 25:2): Here تَقْدِيْر - (designing in a perfect measure) is mentioned after تَخْلِيْق (Creation). تَخْلِيْق means to create something from nothing that is to bring in something without any pre-existing substance whatsoever. And تَقْدِيْر (designed in a perfect measure) means that, whatever has been created, its components, appearance, properties and signs are made to suit the purpose of its creation. The form of the sky, its constituents and its shape are in conformity to that purpose for which Allah Ta'ālā has created it. Similarly, the stars and planets possess those qualities for which they are created. Whatever we see on the earth is absolutely perfect in its form, shape and construction to suit the purpose and requirement of its creation. For instance, earth is not made in such a liquid form, that anything put on it is drowned, nor is it made too hard like steel or

concrete to be dug. It is made in the solid form and given a hardness that it could be dug to take out underground water or to place foundations for the buildings. Water is given the liquid form which again is full of Divine Wisdom and helps meet the multifarious needs of the creatures spread all over the earth. Water does not reach on its own at all the places where it is needed. Man has to put in some skill and labour to take it to places where it is required. On the other hand air is a compulsory gift which reaches every place without any labour or an active role from human beings. Even if someone wants to avoid it, he has to exert extra labour. It is not the place to describe Divine creations and their characteristics as it needs volumes for the purpose. Each and every creation of Allah Subḥanahū is perfect in its purpose and has its own peculiar properties and traits. Imām Ghazzāli has written a book on the subject by the name الحكمة فی مخلوقات الله تعالیٰ .

These verses define the sacred and exalted position of the Holy Qur'ān and by addressing the person on whom the book is revealed as عَبْدِہ (His slave) in the very beginning of the Sūrah, his honoured position is highlighted. There cannot be a greater honour for any one than to be called by Allah Ta'ālā as 'His own'..

Verses 4 - 9

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اِفْكُ ِۨ افْتَرٰىهُ وَاَعَانَهٗ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ اٰخَرُوْنَ ۚ فَقَدْ جَآءُوْ ظُلْمًا وَّزُوْرًا ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلٰى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ اَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِيْ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٦﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَالِ هٰذَا الرَّسُوْلِ يَاْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِيْ فِي الْاَسْوَاقِ ؕ لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُوْنَ مَعَهٗ نَذِيْرًا ﴿٧﴾ اَوْ يُلْقٰٓى اِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ اَوْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ جَنَّةٌ يَّاْكُلُ مِنْهَا ؕ وَقَالَ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُوْرًا ﴿٨﴾ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٩﴾

And said those who disbelieve, "This is nothing but a lie

he (the messenger) has fabricated and some other people have helped him in it." Thus they came up with transgression and falsehood. [4] **And they said, "(These are) the tales of the ancients he (the messenger) has caused to be written, and they are read out to him at morn and eve."** [5] **Say, "It is sent down by the One who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth. Indeed He is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [6]

And they said, "What sort of messenger is this who eats food and walks in the markets? Why is it that an angel has not been sent down to him who would have been a warner alongwith him, [7] **or that a treasure is not thrown down to him, or that he has no garden to eat from it?" And the transgressors said, "You are following none but a bewitched man."** [8] **See how they coined similes for you, so they have gone astray and cannot find a way.** [9]

Commentary

From this point onward the objections raised by infidels and polytheists against the Holy Qur'ān and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are related together with the answers to those objections.

The first objection was that the Qur'ān was not a revealed book from Allah Ta'ālā, but has been compiled from the old stories and narrations by the Jews and Christians which have been reduced into writing by the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, since he himself was illiterate and could not write. And because he could not read or write, he would get them read out to him day and night, so that he could remember them by heart, then he would repeat them before people and claim that he had received that revelation from Allah Ta'ālā.

The answer to this objection was given by the Holy Qur'ān قُلْ اَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِیْ یَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ , that is (Say, "It is sent down by the One who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth - 25:6).

The essence of this answer is that the Qur'ān itself is an evidence to the fact that it is the Divine message from Him who is Omniscient and who knows fully well all the secrets of the Heavens and the earth. This is why Qur'ān is a miraculous Message, and the whole world is challenged to bring out a Sūrah or even a verse to match it, if its divine origin is

refused. This was a challenge to a people - the Arabs - who were well known for their literary proficiency and art of expression, and for whom composition of a piece of literature was not a problem. But they too did not dare to attempt to compose something similar to Qur'ān. Although they were willing to sacrifice all their material wealth for opposing the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his mission, so much so that they were willing to sacrifice even their children and their own lives to counter the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mission and message, but they dared not attempt to compose a passage similar to a Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

This is a clear proof of the fact that it is not a work of a human being. Otherwise other people could also have composed passages similar to Qur'ān. Therefore, it is definitely the revelation from Allah Ta'ālā. Apart from the beauty of expression and language, the Book also excels in its meanings. The multifarious subjects it covers can only be dealt by One who knows everything whether hidden or exposed. This subject has been dealt with in detail in the first volume of Ma'āriful Qur'ān.

The Second Objection was that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a prophet, he should not have been eating and drinking like common people; instead he should have been free from eating and drinking like angels. And if this was not so, he should have at least enough wealth and gardens to take care of his day to day needs, so that he may not need to care for his living. Furthermore, how could he be accepted as a prophet when he is neither an angel nor does an angel accompany him to endorse what he preaches, therefore it appears that he has been charmed by someone which has turned his head and that is why he talks like this. A general answer to this objection is given in the verse أُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا that is (See how they coined similes for you, so they have gone astray and cannot find a way. - 25:9). The detailed answer to the objection is given in the next few verses.

Verses 10 - 20

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذٰلِكَ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا

الْاَنْهٰرُ ۙ وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكَ قُصُوْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِالسَّاعَةِ ۟ وَاَعْتَدْنَا

لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ إِذَا رَأَتْهُم مِّن مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا
لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا وَزَفِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا
هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا وَادْعُوا ثُبُورًا كَثِيرًا
﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ أَذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ط كَانَتْ
لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَمَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ ط كَانَ عَلَىٰ
رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مَّسْئُولًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ أَأَنتُمْ أَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَٰؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ﴿١٧﴾
قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنبَغِي لَنَا أَن نَّتَّخِذَ مِن دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
وَلَٰكِن مَّتَّعْتَهُمْ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ ج وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا
﴿١٨﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوكُم بِمَا تَقُولُونَ لا فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا ج
وَمَن يَظْلِم مِّنكُمْ نُذِقْهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ ط
وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً ط أَتَصْبِرُونَ ج وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾

Glorious is the One who, if He so wills, would give you better than that - gardens beneath which rivers flow, and would give you palaces. [10] **But they have disbelieved the Hour (the Day of Judgment) and We have prepared, for those who disbelieve the Hour, a flaming fire.** [11] **When it will see them from a distant place, they will hear (the sounds of) its raging and breathing,** [12] **and when they will be thrown into a narrow place therein, while they will be chained together, they will call for death.** [13] **Do not call for one death today, but call for many a death.** [14]

Say, "Is that better or the eternal paradise the God-fearing are promised?" It will be a reward for them and a final abode. [15] **For them there will be whatever they wish, while they will be living for ever. This is a promise undertaken by your Lord, (the fulfillment of)**

which will be prayed for. [16]

And (remember) the Day when He will gather them and what they used to worship beside Allah and will say (to the latter ones), "Did you mislead these My servants or did they themselves lost the way?" [17] **They will say, "Pure are you. It was not for us to take to other guardians than You. Instead, You gave them and their fathers (worldly) benefits till they forgot the advice and became a ruined people."** [18] **Thus they will refute you in what you say and you will not be able to repulse (the punishment) or to receive help. And whoever commits injustice from among you, We will make him taste a painful punishment.** [19]

And We did not send any messengers before you, but all of them used to eat food and walk in the markets. And We have made some of you a test for some others. Would you observe patience? And your Lord is Ever-seeing. [20]

Commentary

In the forgoing verses a general answer was given to the doubts raised by the infidels and polytheists in regard to prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . Here in the above verses a detailed reply is given to the objections. The gist of the reply is that because of your ignorance and mental block you have raised the issue that if he ﷺ were really a prophet, then he should have possessed a great deal of material wealth and gardens etc. so that he should have been free from making efforts for his sustenance. The simple reply to this objection is that there is no problem for Us to provide material wealth to Our messengers; rather if We so wish we can make them kings of the mammoth empires, as we had done in the case of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, who were made rulers of the gigantic empires and were endowed with enormous wealth, which is a clear sign of Our omnipotence. But in the interest of common people and other numerous considerations, it is required that prophets should be kept away from the material wealth of the world. Especially in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was preferred by Allah Ta'ālā to keep him in line with the ordinary Muslims by way of worldly possessions, and he also preferred for himself to be like that. It is reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad and in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā

Abū 'Umāmah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Allah Ta'ālā offered to him to turn the entire valley and hills of Makkah into gold for him. On that he requested to Him "No my Lord, I would prefer that I get sustenance one day (to offer my thanks to You) and go without food the next (to be patient). Also, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "If I wanted, mountains of gold would have been around me." (Maẓharī)

The sum and substance of all this is that it is Allah's wisdom to keep the prophets poor which is also in the best interest of the people at large. Also, the prophets are not forced to lead a poor life. On the contrary they have a choice either to opt for an ordinary simple life or else Allah Ta'ālā can make them wealthy with a lot of property. But Allah Ta'ālā has made them such that they do not desire any material wealth and instead prefer a simple and poor life for themselves.

The second objection infidels had raised was that if he ﷺ was really a prophet, he would not have been eating and drinking like ordinary people nor would he walk in the markets to earn his livelihood. This objection was based on the assumption of many infidels that Allah's messengers could only be angels and not humans. The answer to this false notion is given in the Holy Qur'ān at several places. The answer given here is that the prophets whom you admit to be prophets were also humans and not angels. They used to eat, drink and work like ordinary human beings. Hence you should have deduced from this that eating and drinking is not something repugnant to prophethood. The last verse وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَکَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِیْنَ اِلَّآ اِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ (And We did not send any messengers before you, but all of them used to eat food - 25:20) has put forward the same argument.

There is great wisdom in economic difference between people

وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً (And We have made some of you test for some others - 25:20). There is an allusion in the verse that Allah Ta'ālā had complete power to make all humans wealthy, prosperous, healthy and of high status. But this way nobody would have been poor, weak or sick - a position which would have created innumerable social problems resulting in chaos and confusion. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā has made some rich and some poor, some healthy and some sick, some strong and some weak, and some with high status and some others unknown. This way every single individual is at test because of his or her peculiar placing in society and

community. The rich and healthy people are at test for their thankfulness, while poor and sick persons are on trial for their patience. For this very reason the Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised that whenever you see someone who is wealthier, healthier, stronger or higher in status you should at once try to turn towards those who are lower than you in wealth, health, strength and status so that instead of feeling jealous, which is a sin, you should thank Allah Ta'ālā for giving you better placing in this world as against those who have less than you. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Maẓharī)

Verses 21 - 22

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَ نَا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ نَرٰى رَبَّنَا ؕ لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْ عُتُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ لَا بُشْرٰى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾

And said those who do not apprehend to meet Us, "Why the angels are not sent down to us or why do we not see our Lord?" Indeed they think too highly of themselves and have gone too far in rebellion. [21] **The Day they will see the angels, there will be no good news for the sinners that day, and they will say , "(We need) a shelter, fully protected!"** [22]

Commentary

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَ نَا (And said those who do not believe in meeting Us - 25:21). رَجَاء (Rajā:) means to hope for something desired. Sometimes it is also used for having fear, as mentioned by Ibn-al-Ambārī, the famous scholar of Arabic lexicon. Here in this verse it is used for apprehension and fear. Thus the meaning of the phrase is 'those who are not apprehensive of being brought before Us'. The allusion is toward those who totally deny the Hereafter as only they could have the courage to raise such preposterous and absurd points and put such frivolous demands. Those who believe in the Hereafter dread it so much all the time that they have no time to waste over such ridiculous ideas. In the present time those who appear to be unsure about the teachings and injunctions of Islam and indulge in dubious debate and arguments under

the influence of modern education allude toward weakness of their faith in the Hereafter. When one attains total faith in the Hereafter then there is no question of having such dubious doubts.

حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا (25:22) The literal meaning of حِجْر is protection, and مَحْجُورًا is fully protected. This word was used in Arabic language at the time of danger, when there was a danger in sight. The word was used to seek protection - that is to ask for protection against the imminent danger. Likewise, on the Dooms Day when the infidels will see angels approaching toward them with chastisement, they will utter this word as per their habit in this world to seek protection. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has described the meaning of this word حَرَامًا مُحَرَّمًا (that is banned, prohibited).

According to this interpretation, the phrase will mean that on the Dooms Day when the infidels will see the angels approaching them with chastisement, they will seek their pardon and plead to let them in the paradise. In response to their pleading the angels will reply حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا - that is the Paradise is banned and prohibited for infidels. (Maẓharī)

Verses 23 - 31

وَقَدِمْنَآ إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ هَبَآءً مَّنْثُورًا ﴿٢٣﴾ أَصْحٰبُ
الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَّأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ
السَّمَآءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ تَنْزِيلًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اَلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذِ الْحَقُّ
لِلرَّحْمٰنِ ۚ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَسِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ
عَلٰى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يٰلَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يٰوَيْلَتٰى
لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ
إِذْ جَآءَنِي ۚ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ
يٰرَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ مَهْجُورًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا
لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۚ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَّنَصِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾

And We will come to whatever deeds they did and will

turn them into scattered dust. [23] **The people of Paradise, on that day will be the best in (terms of their) abode and best in (terms of their) resting-place.** [24]

And the Day the sky will break open with a cloud and the angels are sent down in a majestic descent, [25] **the Kingdom on that day will be for the Raḥmān, and for the disbelievers it will be a difficult day.** [26] **And (Be mindful of) the Day the wrongdoer will bite his hands saying, "Would that I had taken a path alongwith the messenger!** [27] **Woe to me! Would that I had not taken so-and-so for my friend!** [28] **Indeed he led me astray from the advice after it had come to me." And the Satan is man's betrayer.** [29] **And the messenger will say, "O my Lord, my people had taken this Qur'ān as a thing to be deserted."** [30]

And in a similar way We made for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners, but your Lord suffices as a guide and as a supporter. [31]

Commentary

خَيْرٌ مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَّاَحْسَنُ مَقِيْلًا (The best in (terms of their) abode and best in (terms of their) resting-place - 25:24). Permanent residence is called مُسْتَقَر while مَقِيل is derived from قَيْلُولَه which means siesta. Hence مَقِيل means the place for having siesta. Probably مَقِيل is specifically mentioned here because it is referred in one of the traditions that on the Dooms day Allah Ta'ālā will complete reckoning of the entire creation by noon and the people of paradise will reach Paradise at the time of siesta and so will the condemned in the Hell. (Qurṭubī)

تَشَقَّقُ السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمَامِ (The sky will break open with a cloud - 25:25). The explanation of the verse is that the sky will rip apart and a sort of liquid cloud will descend from it which will be carrying angels with it. This cloud will look like a canopy descending from the sky and will be bearing Allah Ta'ālā's refulgence surrounded by angels. This will precede the beginning of the reckoning and the sky will rip open only to make an opening. It will not be the same ripping as the one when the *ṣūr* (صُوْر) will be blown to finish off the earth and the sky, because this descension of the cloud will take place after the second blowing of the *ṣūr* (صُوْر) when the earth and the sky would have taken the new shape. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

يٰوَيْلَتٰى لَيْتَنِىْ لَمْ اَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيْلًا (Woe to me! would that I had not taken so-and-so for my friend - 25:28). This verse was revealed on an especial occasion, but its implication is universal. The background is that 'Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu'aiṭ was one of the chieftains of polytheists in Makkah. It was customary with him that whenever he would return after an expedition, he used to invite the nobility of the city to dinner. He also used to call on the Holy Prophet ﷺ frequently. When he presented the food to the Holy Prophet ﷺ he said "I cannot eat your food until you proclaim that Allah is one and no one can be associated with Him in worship and that I am His Rasūl." 'Uqbah recited this sentence and then the Holy Prophet ﷺ ate the dinner according to his promise, 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf was a close friend of 'Uqbah. When he learnt that 'Uqbah has accepted Islam and has recited the Kalīmah Ṭayyabah he was very crossed with him. 'Uqbah tried to defend himself by explaining that Muḥammad ﷺ was an eminent person of Quraysh and if he had returned without having his meal at his house, it would have been very degrading for 'Uqbah. Therefore, in order to please him, he repeated the sentence (كلمه). 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf did not accept this explanation and asked 'Uqbạh to go and spit on Holy Prophet's ﷺ face if he was really ashamed. The wretched man obliged his depraved friend and did as he had suggested. Allah Ta'ālā disgraced them both in this world as well, as both were killed in the battle of Badr (Baghawī). The torment he will face on the Dooms day is described in this verse that when he will see the torment before him, he will bite his fingers in distress and repentance and say "would that he had not made 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf his friend in the world". (Maẓharī & Qurṭubī)

Friendship of wicked persons and non believers will be a matter of shame and repentance in the Hereafter

It is explained in Tafsīr Maẓharī that although these verses were revealed in respect of the 'Uqbah, yet the moral of the verse is universal. This can be noticed by the use of the word فُلَانًا (so-and-so) in the verse, which alludes that the message is universal. The moral that can be deduced from these verses is that when two friends get together in acts of immorality and sin and help each other in performing forbidden deeds, then the same will apply to them and they will be remorseful and feel sorry for their friendship in the Hereafter. Musnād Aḥmed, Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd etc. have reproduced a narration on the authority of Sayyidnā

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said لا تصاحب الامومنا ولا یاکل مالک الا تقی (Do not make a non-Muslim your friend and your possessions should be used only by the pious persons.- Maẓharī), that is, do not have the non-pious as your friend. And Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ has reported a tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ :

المرء علی دین خلیله فلینظر من یخالل (رواه البخاری)

> Every person is influenced by the faith and way of life of his friends. Therefore, one must be very mindful when selecting his friends. (Bukhārī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked what sort of friends should we keep in our company. To this he replied:

من ذکر کم باللّٰه رویته، وزاد فی علمکم منطقه، وذکرکم بالآخرة عمله (رواه البزار)

(قرطبی)

> The one who reminds you of Allah when you see him, and adds to your knowledge when he speaks, and reminds you of the Hereafter when he acts. (Qurṭubī)

وَقَالَ الرَّسُوْلُ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ قَوْمِى اتَّخَذُوْا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ مَهْجُوْرًا (That is Rasūl ﷺ will say, O my Lord my people have forgotten and forsaken Qur'ān - 25:30). There is a difference of opinion among the commentators whether this complaint of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Allah Ta'ālā about his people would be on Dooms Day or was made in his life time. Both views appear valid. But the verse following this verse suggests that he made this complaint during his lifetime and the next verse was revealed to appease him. The next verse reads وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ (In a similar way We made for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners - 25:31). It means that if your adversaries do not accept Qur'ān, it is not something new. In the past as well people have defied Our message and the messengers had to contend with that. The best course for you also is to be contended.

Abandoning to follow Qur'ān is a great sin

On the face of it abandonment of Qur'ān means its denial or non non-acceptance, which is expected only from the infidels. However, in certain traditions it is reported that those Muslim who do believe in the Qur'ān but neither they read it nor try to follow it fall as much within the ambit of this category of people. Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ has quoted the Holy

Prophet ﷺ as saying:

> من تعلّم القران وعلّق مصحفه لم يتعاهده ولم ينظر فيه جاء يوم القيمٰة متعلقا به يقول: يا ربّ العٰلمين ان عبدک هذا اتخذنی مهجورًا فاقض بینی و بینه. ذکره الثعلبی (قرطبی)
>
> The person who has learnt Qur'ān and then hanged it (on the wall), neither he recites it routinely nor ponders over its injunctions will be brought on the Doomsday with Qur'ān hanging by his neck with a sling, and will complain before Allah Ta'ālā 'this servant of Yours had abandoned me, so decide between me and him". (Qurṭubī)

Verse 32

> وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً ۚ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنٰهُ تَرْتِيْلًا ﴿۳۲﴾
>
> **And said those who disbelieved, "Why has the Qur'ān not been revealed to him all at once?" (It has been sent down) in this way (i.e. in parts) so that We make your heart firm, and We revealed it little by little.** [32]

Commentary

The sequence of objections by the infidels and polytheists and their answers, which had started in the beginning of the Sūrah, is continuing. Here in this verse the objection as to why the Qur'ān was revealed gradually bit by bit and not in one go is answered. The wisdom behind gradual revelation of the Qur'ān as explained in the verse is that it was to keep the heart of the Holy Prophet ﷺ firm and strong. By gradual revelation the Holy Prophet's ﷺ heart was made strong in the following manner:

1. It was made easy for him to remember the Qur'ān by heart. If the whole Book was revealed in one go, its remembrance by heart would not have been that easy. Remembrance of the Qur'ān by heart expelled all worries from his heart.

2. Whenever an objection was raised by the infidels or a maltreatment was perpetrated, a verse would reveal to give him fortitude. In case the entire Qur'ān was revealed in one piece and the fortitude for the special

occasion had also been mentioned in it, its search in the Book would have been painstaking. Moreover, it would have been uncertain whether or not the attention of the Holy Prophet ﷺ would be drawn to the particular verse

3. Instant response by way of revelation to answer awkward questions was by itself the confirmation of Allah Ta'ālā's support which is the biggest source of strength for the heart. The wisdom of keeping the heart strong is not dependent on gradual revelations alone. Other factors in this regard are mentioned in the following verse of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl وَقُرْاٰنًا فَرَقْنٰهُ لِتَقْرَاَهٗ عَلَی النَّاسِ عَلٰی مُکْثٍ (And We have divided the Qur'ān in portion, so that you may recite it to the people gradually - 17:106). (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Verses 33 - 36

وَلَا يَاْتُوْنَكَ بِمَثَلٍ اِلَّا جِئْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ يُحْشَرُوْنَ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهٗٓ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ وَزِيْرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ فَقُلْنَا اذْهَبَآ اِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۭ فَدَمَّرْنٰهُمْ تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And they bring to you no hypothesis, but We bring to you the correct position and (an answer) better explained. [33]

Those who will be driven on their faces to hell - they are the worst in situation and far more astray from the path. [34]

And surely We gave Mūsā the Book and appointed his brother Hārūn as a minister with him. [35] **So we said, "Go, both of you, to the people who have rejected Our signs" Then We annihilated them totally.** [36]

Commentary

Verse no. 33 supports and accentuates the explanation given above for the wisdom in the gradual revelation of Qur'ān in as much as it promises Allah's support in any situation of awkward questions asked by the

infidel.

اَلَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا (who have rejected Our signs - 25:36). Here it is described that the people of Pharaoh had denied Allah's verses. It is to be noted that by that time Torah was not revealed to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام . Therefore it cannot be Torah which was denied. Hence it is either the proofs of the Oneness of Allah, which can be understood by any one according to his mental level, or the traditions of the past prophets which are passed on through generations, no matter in what little detail, are referred here as rejection of His message. The same thing is referred in Qur'ān as well وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوْسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ (Joseph brought you the clear signs before - 40:34). It mentions about the teachings of the earlier prophets, which had also reached them. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Verses 37 - 44

وَقَوْمَ نُوْحٍ لَّمَّا كَذَّبُوا الرُّسُلَ اَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ اٰيَةً ؕ
وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿۳۷﴾ وَّعَادًا وَّثَمُوْدَا وَاَصْحٰبَ الرَّسِّ
وَقُرُوْنًا بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿۳۸﴾ وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْاَمْثَالَ ۫ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا
تَتْبِيْرًا ﴿۳۹﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِيْٓ اُمْطِرَتْ مَطَرَ السَّوْءِ ؕ اَفَلَمْ
يَكُوْنُوْا يَرَوْنَهَا ۚ بَلْ كَانُوْا لَا يَرْجُوْنَ نُشُوْرًا ﴿۴۰﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَوْكَ اِنْ
يَّتَّخِذُوْنَكَ اِلَّا هُزُوًا ؕ اَهٰذَا الَّذِيْ بَعَثَ اللّٰهُ رَسُوْلًا ﴿۴۱﴾ اِنْ كَادَ
لَيُضِلُّنَا عَنْ اٰلِهَتِنَا لَوْلَآ اَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا ؕ وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ حِيْنَ
يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ اَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۴۲﴾ اَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ ؕ
اَفَاَنْتَ تَكُوْنُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿۴۳﴾ اَمْ تَحْسَبُ اَنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُوْنَ
اَوْ يَعْقِلُوْنَ ؕ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا كَالْاَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ اَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۴۴﴾

As for the people of Nūḥ, when they rejected the messengers, We drowned them and made them an example for mankind. And We have prepared a painful punishment for the transgressors. [37] **And (We annihilated also the peoples of) 'Ād and Thamūd and the**

people of Rass and many generations in between them. [38]

And to each (of them) We cited examples, and each of them We brought to utter ruin. [39]

And indeed they (the pagans of Makkah) have passed by the town that was afflicted by an evil rain sent down to it. So, have they not been seeing it? Rather, they do not believe in Resurrection. [40] **And when they see you, they take you as nothing but a laughing stock, (saying) "Is this the man whom Allah has sent as a messenger?** [41] **He would have almost led us astray from our gods, had we not been so firm towards them." And they will know when they will see the punishment, who is farther astray in his way.** [42] **Tell me about the one who has taken his desire as his god, would you then, become a guardian for him?** [43] **Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are nothing but like cattle. Rather, they are even farther astray in their way.** [44]

Commentary

In the above verses it is mentioned that it had been the common practice of the people through the ages to rebuff the prophets and the message they had brought. In order to give weight to this assertion a few of the well known prophets are mentioned who were rejected by their people and then they were subjected to Allah's wrath and were annihilated completely. By drawing a parallel with the past generations it is elucidated that the pagans of Makkah would not listen to any reason as they were no better than the animals or even worse than that.

It is stated about the people of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام that they had rejected the prophets, although they had neither seen the past prophets nor had they rejected them. What is actually meant here is that while denying Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام they had by implication rejected all the prophets, because the principals of religion expounded by all prophets are essentially the same. Hence rejection of one prophet is tantamount to rejection of all.

أَصْحٰبَ الرَّسِّ (People of Rass - 25:38). In Arabic رَسّ (Rass) means unlined well. Neither Qur'ān nor any authentic tradition describes these people in

any detail. Whatever information is available about them is through Israelite traditions, which differ from one another. It is more likely that the remaining people of Thamūd had settled down near a well. It is not mentioned in the Qur'ān or any tradition as to how they were tormented. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Following forbidden things - a type of idolatory

اَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ (Tell me about the one who has taken his desire as his god - 25:43). The one who practises forbidden things which are against the tenets of Islam to satisfy his personal desires is described in this verse as the worshiper of his own lust. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said that the selfish desires are like an idol which is worshipped (by the infidels) and then he recited this verse to prove his point. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 45 - 62

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ لَجَعَلَهٗ سَاكِنًا ۚ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا
الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيْلًا ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ قَبَضْنٰهُ اِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَّسِيْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَهُوَ
الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَّالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَّجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُوْرًا
﴿٤٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْٓ اَرْسَلَ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًاۢ بَيْنَ يَدَىْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ
السَّمَآءِ مَآءً طَهُوْرًا ﴿٤٨﴾ لِّنُحْیِۦَ بِهٖ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَّنُسْقِيَهٗ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَآ
اَنْعَامًا وَّاَنَاسِىَّ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنٰهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ۖ فَاَبٰى
اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِىْ كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَّذِيْرًا
﴿٥١﴾ ۖ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهٖ جِهَادًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٥٢﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَّهٰذَا مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ۚ
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَّحِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ مِنَ
الْمَآءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهٗ نَسَبًا وَّصِهْرًا ۗ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيْرًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ
مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلٰى رَبِّهٖ

ظَهِيْرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلْ مَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ
عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ تَوَكَّلْ
عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِيْ لَا يَمُوْتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهٖ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِهٖ بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ
خَبِيْرًا ﴿٥٨﴾ ۛالَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِيْ سِتَّةِ
اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۚ اَلرَّحْمٰنُ فَسْئَلْ بِهٖ خَبِيْرًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاِذَا
قِيْلَ لَهُمُ اسْجُدُوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ قَالُوْا وَمَا الرَّحْمٰنُ ۗ اَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَاْمُرُنَا
وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿٦٠﴾ تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّجَعَلَ
فِيْهَا سِرٰجًا وَّقَمَرًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً
لِّمَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّذَّكَّرَ اَوْ اَرَادَ شُكُوْرًا ﴿٦٢﴾

Have you not turned your vision to your Lord, how He prolonged the shadow? And if He so willed, He would have made it stand still. Then We made the sun an indicator for it. [45] **Then We pulled it toward Us in a gradual manner.** [46] **And He is the One who has made the night an apparel for you, and the sleep a means of rest and has made the day a means of revival.** [47] **And He is the One who has sent the winds conveying good news before His mercy. And we have sent down purifying water from the heavens,** [48] **so that We revive a dead land therewith and give drink to the many cattle and humans We have created.** [49] **And We have distributed it (the water) among them, so that they may take lesson, then most of the people opted for nothing but ungratefulness.** [50]

And if We so willed, We would have sent a warner in every town. [51] **So do not obey the infidels and strive against them with it (the Qur'ān) a great striving.** [52]

And He is the One who joined the two seas - this is sweat, very sweat, and this is bitter, very bitter - and made between them a buffer and a barrier, prohibited (to cross). [53] **And He is the One who created man from water, then made of him kinship of blood and kinship of**

in-laws. And your Lord is All-Powerful. [54]

And they worship, instead of Allah, what can neither give them any benefit nor can cause them any harm. And the disbeliever is always a supporter (of Satan) against his Lord. [55] **And We did not send you but as a bearer of good news and as a warner.** [56] **Say, "I do not demand from you any fee except that whoever so wills should adopt a way to his Lord.** [57] **And place your trust in the Ever-Living who cannot die, and proclaim His purity alongwith His praise. And enough is He to be aware of the sins of His slaves,** [58] **the One who created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them in six days, then He positioned Himself on the Throne - the Raḥmān, so ask about Him someone who knows.** [59] **And when it is said to them, "Prostrate to the Raḥmān (the Most Merciful)," they say "What is Raḥmān? Shall we prostrate to that to which you direct us?" And it increases nothing in them except aversion.** [60]

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [61] **And He is the One who made the day and the night following each other, for the one who wishes to be mindful or wishes to show gratitude.** [62]

Commentary

Relationship between causes and effects and their being subject to Allah's will

The above verses describe complete and total omnipotence of Allah Taʿālā and His bounties and favors showered on human kind. This also proves Oneness of Allah and that no one can share His right of worship.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ (Have you not turned your vision to your Lord, how He prolonged the shadow? - 25:45). Sunlight and shade are such blessings of God that without them it would not have been possible for mankind to survive and carry on its day to day functions. If there is sunlight all the time, it will create problems not only for humans but for all living things. On the other hand, if there is shade all the time, then also neither man nor other living creatures can survive. Allah Taʿālā has created these two blessings by His limitless power and made them

beneficial for the mankind. At the same time Allah Taʻālā, through His infinite wisdom, has tied up all created things with specific causes in the sense that these things come into existence only when such causes are available, and if they are absent, these things do not exist. Similarly, if the causes are strong and available in abundance, the existence of their effects is also strong and abundant, and vice versa. Creation of crops and grass is dependent upon availability of land, water and air. Similarly, light is dependent on availability of the sun and the moon. Rain is dependent on clouds and air. Then there is such a strong bond between these causes and effects that it binds them together in such a way that there has not been the slightest deviation in the working of things even after the passage of centuries. For instance look at the solar system. This system has been working for centuries, yet there has not been the minutest change or deviation in its working, nor has there been a split of a second's difference in the movements of the entire system. Neither there is any change in the movements of the sun and the moon nor do they require any overhauling or repair work. They are moving along their orbits since the origin of the universe at a defined speed. One can calculate their movements with precision and predict their positions in advance for centuries.

This marvelous system of causes and effects was, in fact, a masterpiece of Allah's creation and a solid proof of His boundless power and infinite wisdom, but it was this firmness of the system which ultimately made people neglectful of Allah's power. When they perceived that all the 'effects' in this universe are linked with some visible causes, they confined their eyes to these visible causes only and started believing them to be the original creator of all these events. The real power of the Creator which was the original cause of all causes remained hidden behind the covers of visible causes only. The prophets are sent and the divine books are revealed to remind human beings that they must rise above this shortsightedness, and see behind the cover of these apparent causes and the omnipotence of their creator who is in fact running and controlling the whole system. This is the only way to discover the real truth about this universe. The verses under consideration are meant to point out to this reality.

In the verse اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ (Have you not turned your vision to

your Lord, how He proloneed the shadow? - 25:45). People are reminded of the perfect solar system and the benefits people draw from it. It is a common experience to see the sun rising from the east when the shades are long. Then with the passage of time they are shortened and at noon become the shortest. Then again as the sun moves toward west the shades start lengthening and before the sunsets become the longest. In this whole process the entire humanity draws unlimited benefits from sunlight and its shades, and clearly realizes that there are the effects of the movements of the sun between East and West, but little attention is paid to the question as to who has created this sun and who has bound it to a well - planned system. Answer to this question cannot be found by one's eyes, but it can be perceived by the insight of heart and mind.

If He so willed, Allah would have made sunlight and shades stationary so that where there was sunlight it would have stayed as such, and where there was shade it would have remained such for ever. Just think of the problems it would have brought about. But in His Wisdom He has not done so and instead created things which are beneficial and useful for humanity. The next verse وَلَوْشَآءَ لَجَعَلَه سَاكِنًا (and if He so willed, He would have made it stand still - 45) means exactly that.

In order to explain the phenomenon of lengthening and shortening of shades, it is stated in the verse قَبَضْنَاهُ اِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا (45) that is "We pulled it toward Us in a gradual manner." It is well known that Allah Ta'ālā is beyond the purview of body or direction and hence there is no question of the shade being pulled toward Him. What it means is that shortening of the shades takes place by His Supreme Power.

To work during day time and rest at night is based on great Wisdom

وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَّالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَّجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُوْرًا

> And He is the One who has made the night an apparel for you, and the sleep a means of rest and has made the day a means of revival. [47]

The night is referred as the apparel in this verse to describe that it covers up everything like a natural sheet as does the dress to human body. The word سُبَاتًا (*subāta*) is derived from سَبْت (*sabt*) which means to cut out. سُبَات is that thing which cuts out some other thing.

Allah Ta'ālā has made the sleep to shed away the exhaustion and fatigue one develops after the day long work. In sleep one is cut off with stress and strain of mind and body while they are rested. Hence the word سُبَات is generally translated as rest, relaxation or tranquility. So the sense of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā has created the night as a covering to everything then imposed sleep on men and all living things, so that they rest and relax.

Here one needs to ponder over a few things. Everyone knows that sleep is a blessing and a source of relaxation. But it is human nature to sleep in darkness. It is very difficult to sleep in day light, and even if one goes off to sleep, one is awakened quickly. Conforming to human needs and nature Allah Ta'ālā has made nights dark and cool, so that people can sleep and relax. Hence, night by itself is a blessing and sleep is another blessing. The third blessing is that the entire humanity and animals sleep at night instinctively. If the sleeping time of different people were different from one another, it would have created a number of problems. In such a situation some would have slept at one time and the others at some other, creating problems for one another, because when people are awake, they move about for various works and this movement would have created noise to the annoyance and disturbance for those who were sleeping. Apart from this, people are dependent on each other in many ways and different times of their sleeping would have deprived them of helping each other in their works because working time of one would have been the time of rest for the other.

If human beings would have resorted to a social contract for uniting the times of rest and work for the whole world, it was not, at the first place, an easy task to make billions of people agree on a single resolution, then the implementation of such a contract would have required a lot of formal departments, and still there would have been room for violation of such a contract through corrupt means, as is observed in the contemporary forums. All such problems have been overcome by the creation of night and sleep by Allah Ta'ālā which are greatly beneficial and necessary for human and other living beings. Allah Ta'ālā has instilled in humans such an urge to sleep at night that one can keep awake only with great difficulty and effort. فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين

Similarly in وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُوْرًا (and has made the day a means of revival -

25:47), the day is described as revival, because its opposite, that is sleep, is like death when one loses all his senses. Here again, to keep awake and attend to one's needs during the day time is made mandatory in human beings. If this was not so, some people would have attended to their work while others slept, and this would have caused all sorts of problems.

As in the case of sleep, Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed a great blessing on human beings by creating its need at night. He has also made it part of human nature to keep awake and attend to work during day time, so that people should look after each other's needs. He has also fixed certain timings for certain desires and needs common in all human beings. For instance, all people feel hungry in the mornings and evenings and want to eat. So the eating times of all humans are common which is again a great blessing from Allah Ta'ālā .

وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُوْرًا (And We have sent down purifying water from the heavens - 25:48). In Arabic طَهُوْر (*Ṭahūr*) means something which is pure by itself and which also purifies other things. Allah Ta'ālā has given this quality to water that it is clean by itself and possesses the property to cleanse other things also. The water we use comes down from the clouds in the form of rain, hail or snow. Then some of it flows on the surface of the earth and the rest seeps down into the ground. Under the ground there is a natural drainage system which takes the under ground water to every nook of the earth and then it reappears on the surface in the form of springs, fountains etc. Sometimes the underground water is drawn out by digging wells to reach it. All these waters i.e. that which falls in the form of rain, or that which flows on the surface of earth in the form of rivers, streams or canals, or that which is preserved underground are pure in Sharī'ah and have inherent property of cleaning other things. There is consensus of opinion in *ummah* on this matter and it is the express purport of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah.

When the water is in large quantity as in the case of a pond, pool or a canal, it remains pure even if something filthy has fallen in it. On this point also there is a general consensus, unless the effect of filth is perceptible and the colour, taste and smell of water changes. However, if the quantity of water is small and some filth drops in it, then there is a difference of opinion among the jurists (مجتهدين) on the nature and quantity of filth as well as the quantity of water in which the filth falls.

Details on this issue are described by Maẓharī and Qurṭubī in their commentaries and are also available in the books on Fiqh.

وَّنُسْقِيَهٗ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَآ اَنْعَامًا وَّاَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيْرًا (And give drink to the many cattle and humans We have created - 25:49). The word اَنَاسِيَّ is the plural of إِنْسِيّ and some linguistics have taken it as a plural of إنسان (both the words mean 'human'). This verse has described that the rain is a source of irrigation for land, while it serves as a drink for 'many cattle and humans'. The point worth consideration here is why the word 'many' is used which indicates that some human beings do not benefit from it. This question may be answered by saying that the reference here is to the cattle and human beings living in jungles and deserts who directly use the water of rain. As for the urban people, they normally use the water of wells and canals etc.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنٰهُ بَيْنَهُمْ (And We have distributed it (the water) among them - 25:50). The verse says that We keep rotating the rainfall, that is, it sometimes falls in one locality and sometimes in another. Then sometimes a locality receives in one year more rain and in subsequent years less. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās says that the presumption of some people that the quantity of rains varies from year to year is not really correct. In fact the aggregate amount of water sent down to the world (at macro-level) is equal every year. However, according to Allah's will, its allocation for different territories may change from year to year. Sometimes the quantity of water is curtailed for a specific habitation as a punishment and warning for it, and sometimes the quantity of rain is increased for a particular population, again as a punishment for their misdeeds. Thus the water that was a blessing in its origin turns into a torment for the people who are ungrateful and disobedient.

Jihād with Qur'ān (its propagation) is great Jihād

وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهٖ جِهَادًا كَبِيْرًا (And strive against them with it (the Qur'ān) a great striving - 25:52). This is a Makkan verse when the injunction for Jihād, in the sense of fighting the infidels, had not been revealed. What is ordained in this verse is that you spread the message of Qur'ān among the people at large. Propagation of Qur'ānic message among people and to make them understand it is great Jihād whether it is by mouth, pen or any other means,

وَهُوَالَّذِيْ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَّهٰذَا مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ۚ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا

وَّحِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا

And He is the One who joined the two seas - this is sweat, very sweat and this is bitter, very bitter - and made between them a buffer and a barrier, prohibited (to cross) - 25:53.

The word مَرَجَ (*maraja*) means to let off or allow to roam freely and hence pasture is called مَرَج (*maraj*) that is where animals can graze and roam about. عَذْب (*'adhb*) is sweet water, while فُرَات means delicious and pleasant; and مِلْح (*milh*) means salty and أُجَاج means bitter.

Allah Ta'ālā in His own Wisdom has created two types of waters. One is enormous in size called oceans and cover up about two third of the global space while the rest of the one third space is made up of land mass on which people live. The water of the oceans and seas is extremely brackish, bitter and of a bad taste. On the other hand the water found on land in different forms is potable, pleasant and tasty. This water is just right for the needs of mankind and animals alike who drink it and use it for cleaning. If the water of the seas and oceans were not brackish, it would have decayed very quickly leaving behind a pungent and foul odor making the life unbearable for humans and animals on land. Moreover, the creatures living in ocean and sea water, and number manifold than those living on land could not have survived because when they die, they perish in the brackish water. If they were to die in sweet water their decomposition would have contaminated the water making the survival of the marine life impossible and its stink would have been unbearable for the life on land. Then the garbage of the land is generally dumped in the sea where it is decomposed (except for a few modern age items which need special treatment). Therefore, brackish water of the oceans and seas is a great blessing of Allah Ta'ālā for all creatures, whether living in the sea or on the land. Without the presence of brackish water mass, there would have been no marine or land life.

In this verse it is elucidated that it is a great blessing and grace of Allah Ta'ālā to have provided two types of waters in accordance with the needs of mankind. Then it is a perfect demonstration of His complete power that when a river of sweet water falls into the sea, the two waters (the sweet and the brackish) do not mingle immediately where they meet, but for miles they remain separated from each other, despite the fact that there is no physical curtain between them. This is yet another example of

His omnipotence.

وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَآءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهٗ نَسَبًا وَّصِهْرًا(And He is the One who created man from water then made of him kinship of blood and kinship of in-laws. 25:54) نَسَب (*nasab*, translated above as 'kinship of blood') is that relationship which emanates from either parent, and صِهر (*ṣihr*, translated above as 'kinship of in-laws') is that kinship which is drawn from the wife's side and is called in - laws. All these relations and bonds are Allah's graces given to mankind for a pleasant and tranquil life. If these relations are taken away from someone's life it will be impossible for him to live by himself.

قُلْ مَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا

Say, "I do not demand from you any fee, except that whoever so wills, should adopt a way to his Lord - 25:57.

Allah Ta'ālā advised the Holy Prophet ﷺ to say that he has no personal interest in inviting to accept and follow Allah's message in order to be profitable in this world and the Hereafter. He does not seek any reward from them for his efforts. His reward is only that they turn towards Allah. It is but obvious that if someone moves to the righteous path it is he who will be the gainer. As for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it was his love for the people that he was striving, and has considered the gain of the people as his own. It is just like an old father asks his children to eat and drink and be merry, and declares to them that their eating and drinking is a reward for himself. It is also possible that the correct attitude of the people is taken as a reward for the Holy Prophet ﷺ because he will also be rewarded if the people take up to right path. Some authentic traditions say that if someone asks people to take up the righteous path and they oblige, then not only those who have acted righteously will be rewarded for the good acts, but also the one who has persuaded them to follow the righteous path. (Maẓharī)

فَسْئَلْ بِهٖ خَبِيْرًا (So ask about Him someone who knows - 25:59). In this verse it is described that the creation of the earth and the skies, and then to place Himself on 'Arsh in consonance to His exalted position are all acts of Allah Ta'ālā. If someone wants its confirmation, he should find out from those who know the truth. Here the allusion for knowledge is toward Allah Ta'ālā or Jibra'īl عليه السلام. It is also possible that the reference is toward

the scholars of the previous Books wherein the truth was also mentioned. (Mazharī)

قَالُوْا وَمَا الرَّحْمٰنُ (60) The word رَحْمٰن (Raḥmān, translated as All-Merciful) is an Arabic word and all Arabs knew its meaning, but they did not use it for Allah Ta'ālā. Hence they enquired who and what is Raḥmān (رَحْمٰن).

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ فِى السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّجَعَلَ فِيْهَا سِرٰجًا وَّقَمَرًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّذَّكَّرَ اَوْاَرَادَ شُكُوْرًا ﴿٦٢﴾

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [61] And He is the One who made the day and the night following each other, for the one who wishes to be mindful or wishes to show gratitude. [62] - 25:61,62.

In these two verses it is explained that Allah Ta'ālā has created the sun, the moon and stars which bring about the day and night (on earth) alternately, so that those who give thought to things around them should see manifestation of His omnipotence and proof His Oneness; and the thanks-givers should have occasion for thanks-giving. Therefore, whosoever does not pay heed to manifestation of His creation and does not offer Him his gratitude lives a useless life, and he has lost his capital as well (اللّٰهمّ اجعلنا من الذاکرین الشّاکرین).

Ibn al-'Arabi says that he has heard from the Great Martyr (شهید اکبر) that the one who has attained the age of sixty years and has spent half of his life of thirty years in sleeping, and one sixth of the time of i.e. ten years in taking rest during the day time, is in a great loss. So, he has spent only twenty years of his life in working.

After pointing out about the stars, the planets and the astronomical features, the Qur'ān has made it clear that the repeated reference of these things in the Qur'ān is for the purpose that people contemplate over their creation, movements and resulting phenomenon in order to help visualize and understand the One who creates and controls them, and then pay homage and thanks to Allah Ta'ālā.

Cosmological theories and the Qur'ān

As regards the questions as to what is the reality of the stellar formations and whether the stars are fixed in the sky or are floating in

the space, no basic human need is dependent on answering these questions, neither in this world, nor in the Hereafter. Moreover, there are many issues of this type which could not be resolved finally, despite all the painstaking efforts undertaken by many researchers. Therefore, it is not a necessary service to the Qur'ān to indulge in such controversies beyond the aforesaid purpose of the Holy Qur'ān, that is, to ponder on these wonders as signs of the divine omnipotence and to pay homage to Him for their creation. The modern scientists have, no doubt, acquired wonderful achievements in inventing satellites and space-crafts, in travelling to the moon and bringing dust and stones from there, but it is a pity that the realistic approach about the Creator of this universe, suggested by the Holy Qur'ān, was not only neglected by them, but being proud of these discoveries, they became more distant from it and the people became more confused about the Qur'ānic expressions. There are some people who take these discoveries as against the Qur'ānic expressions and therefore deny the facts proved by real observations, and there are others who try to twist the Qur'ānic expressions to suit the modern theories. It is, therefore, deemed necessary to clarify the correct situation about these issues in some detail. We had already promised in our commentary to Sūrah Al-Ḥijr that we would discuss these issues in detail under Sūrah Al-Furqān. Now, here is that discussion:

Old and modern theories about the location of the planets and the Qur'ānic expressions

Let us take the question about the location of the stars. The verse 61 above says, جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوْجًا (made the stellar formations in the sky). Here the words 'in the sky' apparently indicate that the planets are located in the sky. Similarly the words in a verse of Sūrah Nūḥ are as follows:

اَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا وَّجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيْهِنَّ نُوْرًا وَّجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا

> Did you not realize how Allah has created seven skies, one over the other, and has made moon in them a light. (71:15,16)

Here again the phrase فِيْهِنَّ "in them" refers to skies which apparently indicates that moon is placed in the sky. But these expressions should not be taken as an absolute declaration that moon and other planets are located and fixed physically in the sky. The reason is that the Arabic word

"سَمَاء" (*samā'*, translated as "sky" or 'heavens') is used for two different meanings. It is sometime used for the great mass of the sky, and sometimes for every thing which is above us in the direction of the sky, including the atmosphere between earth and sky and the space. The Holy Qur'ān has used this word for both these meanings in different verses. When it speaks of the sky as a huge mass having gates guarded by angels which are opened at particular times, it takes the word for the first meaning. But when it describes the rain coming down from the sky, it takes the word 'sky' for the second sense. For example the Holy Qur'ān says,

وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً طَهُوْرًا

> And We have sent down purifying water from the heavens. (25:48)

Obviously the word سَمَاء (samā', translated as sky or heavens) in this verse is used in the second sense, firstly because the common observation (even in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has proved that the rain comes from the clouds and not from the sky, and secondly because the Holy Qur'ān itself has mentioned at different places in express terms that the rain comes from the clouds. For example, the following two verses are self-speaking on this point:

ءَاَنْتُمْ اَنْزَلْتُمُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ اَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُوْنَ

> Have you sent it (the rain) down from the clouds or are We who sends it down. (56:69)

وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَآءً ثَجَّاجًا

> And We sent down abundant water from clouds full of rain. (78:14)

In the light of these verses, the word سَمَاء (sky/heavens) used in verse 25:48 above is obviously used for the atmosphere above us.

Now, when the Qur'ān has itself used the word 'sky' in both senses, the verses describing the stars and planets 'in the sky' have equal possibility of either of these two senses. They can be taken to mean that the planets are placed in the mass of the sky, and they can equally be taken to mean that they are in the space. In the presence of these two possibilities no absolute declaration about this issue can be attributed to

the Holy Qur'an. Whatever situation about this issue is proved by observation or by research will not be against any express declaration of the Qur'ān.

Realities of the universe and Qur'ān

It is vital that we clear our thinking on the subject matter of the Holy Qur'ān. It should be clearly understood that Qur'ān is not a book of philosophy or astronomy. It does not deal with the subject of realities of the universe or the form, positioning and movements of its components e.g. stars, planets etc. But at the same time it does mention repeatedly about things on the earth and in the sky and in between them, and invites to ponder over them to set one's beliefs right. On going through all such verses one can make out clearly that the idea behind them is to set right the beliefs of the people or to help them draw benefits for their religious or mundane needs. For instance, Qur'ān has repeatedly mentioned about the earth and sky the stars and planets and their movements and the effects of these movements for man to ponder over in order to comprehend and understand that this spectacular phenomenon has not come into being on its own but there is someone who has created all that, and that someone is Almighty Allah Ta'ālā. For the ordinary man it is not necessary to acquire knowledge of astronomy and related sciences but instead it is sufficient for him to observe the alternation of day and night, their shortening and lengthening of duration, the change in the tilt of sun bringing different seasons, the rising and waning of the moon, the eclipses of the moon and the sun, which every individual see happening. A common man sees them happening with perfect precision and knows that it is going on without the slightest alteration for centuries. Then he can draw the conclusion that there is some Power who has created it, and is running and holding it. That "someone" or that "Power" is none else but Allah Ta'ālā. To arrive at this conclusion one neither has to acquire any special philosophical knowledge or any research data nor the Qur'ān has asked to do so. All that Qur'ān has asked in this regard is to pay attention to these phenomena which one can see by simple observation. Also the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions did not make any arrangement to study astronomical or cosmic theories or to collect data and information on the shape and form of celestial bodies. Had these verses on astronomical and cosmic realities been conveying the message to strive to find out such

realities, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have definitely made an effort in this direction, especially in a situation when facilities were available in his time for acquiring such knowledge. People in Egypt, Syria, India and China had already worked on these subjects and had acquired some knowledge. Five hundred years before Christ (B.C) Pythagorean theory was propounded and established, and later in 139 A.D. Ptolemy also propounded his well known theory. But the most revered person on whom these verses were revealed and the companions who learned them directly from him never made any attempt in that direction. Therefore it is abundantly clear that the Qur'anic verses inviting people to ponder over the cosmological signs did never intend that the space travel and the efforts to conquer the moon and other planets are the basic objectives of the Qur'an, as is suggested by some contemporary modernists under the influence of the West and its discoveries.

The fact of the matter is that the Holy Qur'ān neither invites people's attention towards any old or new philosophical thesis or scientific research nor does it deal with them, nor does it reject them. The plain and simple manner in which the Holy Qur'ān deals with the subjects concerning universe and His creation is to confine their mention only to the extent they are related to the man's religious or worldly needs, and what man can comprehend and learn easily. On the other hand Qur'ān does not involve itself in complicated philosophical discussions and researches which are beyond the comprehension of common man and which sometimes create more confusion in the minds of people for their ever changing nature because of the unending discoveries and inventions being made with the passage of time. In effect Qur'ān guides the humanity toward its ultimate goal which is to seek and follow the righteous path to comply with the Will of Allah Ta'ālā in order to win over His grace in the everlasting abode in the Hereafter. It is neither required nor is it possible for every one to indulge in the discussion of the realities of the universe for the theories of one period become obsolete in the next period by the new discoveries and inventions. Hence no theory or thesis could be regarded as final. The Holy Qur'ān however does make allusions at certain places toward some realities covering subjects like astronomy, space, atmosphere, meteorology, oceanography, geology etc. but to the extent it is needed for human life here or in the Hereafter. Similarly, the

Qur'ān makes references about His creatures on earth related with botany, zoology, petrology and social sciences including trade, agriculture, industry etc., but again to the extent it is required to guide the man to fulfill his religious and worldly duties. Qur'ān does not drag mankind toward unnecessary and futile discussions for making things complicated. However, it is only at some places in the Holy Qur'ān that it mentions a particular issue of this nature expressly or gives a hint towards it.

Criteria of acceptance or rejection of scientific and philosophical theories in the commentary of the Holy Qur'ān

The classical and modern religious scholars are unanimous on the point that if a statement is lucid and unambiguous in the Qur'ān but it contradicts with any old or new theory, it is not permissible to try to twist the Qur'ānic version to try to bring in it line with the modern theories. In such a situation the related theory would be regarded as based on some misconception. However, in the matters in which Qur'ān does not give any express statement and where more than one interpretations are possible from the wordings of the Qur'ān, then in that situation the interpretation closer to observations and evidence would be regarded as correct. For instance, we can take the case of this very verse جَعَلَ فِى السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا (Stellar formations in the sky - 25:61) where it is not specified whether the stars are placed in the space or stuck in the sky. Now in the present time when it is proved by observations that stars are orbiting in the space and are not stuck in the sky, then the Pythagorean theory has been proved correct, because according to the express statements of the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth*, sky has gates guarded by the angels and no one can enter into it. (Had the planets been fixed in the sky, the modern researchers would have not been able to reach them). Based on this observation the verses referring to the stars 'in the sky' will be construed to mean that these stars are in the space. And this will not be tantamount to twisting the Qur'ānic statement, but only the adoption of one of the two possible interpretations. However, if it is claimed that the skies do not exist or that they can be pierced through by the rockets, then it will be in contradiction to Qur'ānic wordings and cannot be accepted because Qur'an has clearly stated in several verses that sky is such an enclosure where there are gates guarded by the angles, and every one cannot enter there.

Similarly, the verse كُلٌّ فِى فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ (Each floating in an orbit)

ascertains the floating of stars in their orbits. Hence, Ptolemaic theory (propounded in 139 A.D) suggesting that the stars are embedded in the body of the sky and have no movement of their own, rather they move with the movement of the sky, is no more valid after the Qur'ānic declaration that stars are orbiting.

Some earlier commentators who believed in the Ptolemaic theory which was in conflict with the Qur'ānic version on astronomy had tried to stretch and twist the meanings of the Quranic words to bring it in line with the Ptolemaic theory. Similarly, in present and recent times when some authors presume that some Qur'ānic verses are at variance with some astronomical theories, they attempt to harmonize them with modern theories by twisting their meanings. Both these attitudes are incorrect and against the classical methodology of the righteous elders. It is, however, a fact that no theory from those advanced by astronomers is in contradiction to the Qur'ān, except the theory of denial of the skies.

Sayyid Maḥmūd Ālūsī Baghdadi who is the greatest commentator and scholar of recent time because of his vast knowledge and understanding of not only the Qur'ān and Sunnah but also of philosophy and astronomical sciences has condensed the work of all classical commentators in his famous and widely acclaimed commentary - Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī. He has adopted the same principle, which is described above. His grandson Allāmah Sayyid Maḥmūd Shukrī Ālūsī has written a book on the subject in which he has endorsed modern astronomical theories in the light of Qur'ānic declarations without twisting their meanings. The relevant passage from his book is quoted below:

> رأيت كثيرا من قواعدها لا يعارض النّصوص الواردة فى الكتاب والسنّة، علىٰ انها لو خالفت شيئا من ذٰلك لم يلتفت اليها ولم نؤول النصوص لاجلها، والتاويل فيها ليس من مذاهب السلف الحريّة بالقبول، بل لابدّ ان نقول ان المخالف لها مشتمل علىٰ خلل فيه، فان العقل الصريح لايخالف النقل الصحيح، بل كل منهما يصدق الاٰخر ويؤيّده (مادل عليه القراٰن)

> "I have checked many principles of the modern astronomy. They are not in conflict with the Qur'ānic text or Sunnah. But in case they differ with Qur'ān and Sunnah then we shall discard them and would not twist the (meaning of) Qur'ān and Sunnah because such twisting would be against the practice of the

elders. In such situations we would argue that any theory which is in conflict with the Qur'ān or Sunnah is imperfect, because the sound reason can never be against an authentic text (of Qur'ān or Sunnah) rather they are complimentary to each other."

In brief it can be said that the subject of stars and planets, their form and movements and related astronomical theories have been discussed and researched for a long time, even before the birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā ﷺ in various countries like Egypt, Syria, India, China and Greece. Among them Pythagoras and Ptolemy are still well known.

Obviously, astronomy is not a new branch of knowledge. It has been the subject of human research since thousands of years. Egypt, Syria, India and China were the centres of astronomical research in the ancient ages. Pythagoras, the famous astronomer, used to teach astronomy in Italy five hundred years before Sayyidnā 'Īsā ﷺ. Then, in 140 BC, Ptolemy ruled the field who developed a cosmological theory that was in total contradiction the theory of Pythagoras, but it found currency with the cooperation of the government, so much so that the theory of Pythagoras was pushed back to a situation where it was ignored almost totally. When the Greek sciences were translated into Arabic, it was the theory of Ptolemy that rules the field, and was rendered into Arabic and became popular in Arabic books. Many commentators of the Qur'an discussed the subject in the light of Ptolemaic theory.

It was in the fifteenth century A.D. (corresponding to the eleventh century A.H.) that the European scholars started their research on the subject. The pioneering work in the field was done by Copernicus, followed by Keiler of Germany and Galileo of Italy. All these astronomers falsified the theory of Ptolemy and endorsed the theory of Pythagoras. In eighteenth century A.D. the discoveries of Issac Newton further confirmed the theory of Pythagoras. He propounded the theory of gravity and proved through experiments that all the planets, including earth, have gravity which makes things fall onto them from above, but the range of gravity varies from planet to planet. If something is able to cross the range of gravity of the earth, it will never fall to the ground.

This theory was proved by empirical evidence when Russian and American scientists, who benefitted from some researches of Al-Bairuni,

the well-known Muslim scientist, succeeded in sending rockets and satellites to the space which, after breaking the gravity range of the earth, started rotating around their orbit. This success prompted the scientists to travel to the planets through space, and ultimately some of them reached the moon, a fact which was admitted by all the experts and was not challenged, even by their opponents. It is from that time that the efforts to reach other planets and to undertake other missions to the space are going on upto the date.

It is interesting to note that John Glenn, the first American astronaut had written article after his successful return from the space in which he had admitted not only the existence of God, but also His omnipotence that controls the whole universe. He had also admitted that all our scientific accomplishments are almost worthless as compared to the natural process going on in the space which cannot be weighed by any type of measures. He had concluded the article with the admission that everything in this universe cannot be perceived or felt by human senses. There are many religious realities which are beyond the access of our senses, but we certainly know, through their visible effects, that they exist, and this leads us to believe that this universe is controlled by an omnipotent power. This article was published in those days in many periodicals, including Readers Digest.

This article shows that the end-result of all these effects was to admit that the mysteries of the universe are not still discovered and that all these planets are controlled by a Supreme, but incorporeal Power. And this is the reality that was declared by the prophets of Allah at the very first step, and this is the very conclusion for which the Holy Qur'ān has invited us to reflect on the creation of sky, earth, stars and planets etc.

Another point worth consideration is that these modern discoveries that cost trillions of dollars, despite their marvelous and admirable courage have not been able to solve the burning problems of humanity suffering from hunger, disease and unrest. The dust and stones brought from the moon at such a huge cost were of little benefit to those who face death on daily basis because of hunger or those who do not have clothes to wear or a home to live. The real benefit of such discoveries, that is, to believe in Allah and be grateful to Him, did not need such extra-ordinary efforts. These benefits can be drawn even by a rustic through simple

observations of these objects, and this is exactly what the Holy Qur'an has stressed upon.

The gist of the matter is that the study of cosmology for making it a source of guidance towards Allah's omnipotence, His all-encompassing wisdom and His being the sole Creator and having no partner is the objective of the Qur'ān towards which the Holy Book has invited us in many places. Secondly, study of these sciences to the extent that they are used for solving the real problems of life is also included in Qur'ānic objectives, but with the difference that the worldly affairs are not taken to be the be-all and the end-all one's activities, but the worldly life is held to be a transitory stage to be looked after to the extent of real needs. The third objective for the study of cosmology which aims at solving merely theoretical issues having no nexus with the first two objectives is a futile exercise not encouraged by the Qur'ān.

It is, therefore, clear that all the modern researches and discoveries cannot be held to be the exact objective of the Qur'an, as suggested by modern scholars. Similarly, these discoveries cannot be held to be repugnant to the Holy Qur'ān, as observed by some conservative scholars. The fact is that these issues are not the subject matter of the Qur'an which is silent about them. If a reality is proved by experiments or observations, it cannot be taken as contradictory to the Qur'ān, and that which is not yet proved no effort should be made to impose it on the Qur'ān through fanciful interpretations.

'Ibād-ur-Raḥmān

عِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ

Verses 63 - 77

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِيْنَ يَمْشُوْنَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَّاِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجٰهِلُوْنَ قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبِيْتُوْنَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَّقِيَامًا ﴿٦٤﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ اِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿٦٥﴾ اِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَّمُقَامًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ

اَنْفَقُوْا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوْا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوْا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ
لَايَدْعُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ وَلَايَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِىْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا
بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُوْنَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ يَلْقَ اَثَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾ يُّضٰعَفْ لَهُ
الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيْهٖ مُهَانًا ﴿٦٩﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَ اٰمَنَ
وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ حَسَنٰتٍ ؕ وَكَانَ
اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَاِنَّهٗ يَتُوْبُ اِلَى
اللّٰهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ ۙ وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوْا
كِرَامًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوْا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا
وَّعُمْيَانًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ اَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيّٰتِنَا
قُرَّةَ اَعْيُنٍ وَّاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا
صَبَرُوْا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيْهَا تَحِيَّةً وَّسَلٰمًا ﴿٧٥﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ حَسُنَتْ
مُسْتَقَرًّا وَّمُقَامًا ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّىْ لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ ۚ فَقَدْ
كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾

And the slaves of the Raḥmān are those who walk on the earth humbly and when the ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully, [63] and those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord, [64] and those who say, "Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Jahannam; indeed, its punishment is a persisting affliction. [65] Indeed, evil it is as an abode and a place to dwell in [66] - and those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly, and it (i.e. their spending) is moderate in between (the two extremes) [67] - and those who do not invoke any other god alongwith Allah, and do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity, except rightfully, nor do they fornicate; and whoever does it, shall face the recompense of his sin, [68] the punishment will be doubled for him and he will remain there disdained, for

ever, [69] **except the one who repents and believes and does good deeds, then Allah will change the bad deeds of such people into good ones, and Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [70] **And whoever repents and does righteous deeds turns to Allah truly** [71] **- and those who do not witness falsehood, and when they pass by the absurd things, Pass by with dignity** [72] **and those who, when they are reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall at them as deaf and blind ones** [73] **- and those who say, "Our Lord, Give us, from our spouses and our children, coolness of eyes and make us heads of the God-fearing.** [74] **Such people will be rewarded with the high place - because they observed patience - and will be received therein with prayers of their eternal life and peace,** [75] **living in it (the Paradise) for ever. It is best as an abode and as a place to dwell in.** [76]

Say (O Prophet), "My Lord will never care about you, if you will not invoke Him. Now since you belied (the truth), the punishment will be inseparable from you. [77]

Commentary

Upto this point Sūrah Al-Furqān has mostly discussed the proofs of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and answered various objections raised in this regard by disbelievers and pagans. While dealing with this subject Allah's wrath and punishment on those who deny His injunctions was also mentioned. Now, at the end of the Sūrah it refers to those special servants of His who firmly believe in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prophethood and their beliefs, deeds and dealings are all in conformity with the will of Allah and His messenger and who follow the Sharī'ah.

The Holy Qur'ān has awarded the title of 'Ibād-ur-Raḥmān to such special servants of Allah Ta'ālā, which is indeed the highest honour. Although all creatures are governed by His will compulsorily, but here the voluntary worship by free will is alluded. That is to surrender completely before Allah and to make all deeds and desires conforming to His pleasure with one's own choice. In these last verses of the Sūrah the special servants of Allah are described whom He has Himself called as His servants to grant them unique honour. Their traits and characteristics are mentioned in the last verses until the end of the Sūrah. In between this

description repentance from infidelity and sins and its effects are also referred to.

By calling these pious persons as His own slaves, Allah Ta'ala has given to them a great title of honour. But by selecting the name Rahman (the All-Merciful) for Himself, out of all His Beautiful Names and attributes, the hint is perhaps given to the fact that these pious people, being the slaves of the All-Merciful, should reflect and demonstrate the quality of mercifulness through their general behavior.

Special traits of Allah Ta'ālā's favoured servants

In the verses under review thirteen traits and habits of the special and favoured servants of Allah Ta'ālā are mentioned. Included among them are correct beliefs, righteous acts, both physical and financial, to obey the command of Allah and His messenger, social dealings with other persons, Allah's fear in His worship, refraining from all sorts of sins and carrying along wife and children on the righteous path with oneself.

The first characteristic of such people is that they are "slaves" (عِبَاد) which is the plural of the word عَبْد (slave) . Here it means the slave who is the property of his Master. All his deeds and prerogatives together with his very life are dedicated to follow the command and will of the Master.

Only such a person can claim to be Allah's slave whose views and beliefs, thinking and desires, and deeds and actions are totally in line with the command and pleasure of his Rab (Master) and who keeps himself alert to carry out each and every command as soon as he is required to.

The second characteristic

يَمْشُوْنَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ هَوْنًا (25:63) that is "they walk on the earth humbly". Here the word هَوْن (*hawn*) is used in the sense of humbleness, modesty and decorum - that is one does not walk with pride or arrogance. It does not mean that one should walk very slowly, because it is against Sunnah if it is without any need. According to the description given in the books of his biography, the Holy Prophet ﷺ used not to walk slowly. Instead his walk was on quicker side. It is recorded in a Ḥadīth كانّما الارض تطوى له that is "He ﷺ used to walk in a manner as if ground was shrinking for him". (Ibn Kathīr) It is for this reason that the righteous elders have described the slow walk, like that of a sick person, as a symbol of arrogance, a sham

habit, and something unwanted (مکروہ). Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ once saw a young man walking very slowly. He ﷺ asked him" Are you sick". He replied "No". Then Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ raised his stick on him and commanded "Always walk robustly". (Ibn Kathīr)

Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has said while explaining this verse يَمْشُوْنَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ هَوْنًا (25:63) that the organs of sincere believers are always humble before Allah, so much so that the one who is not familiar with them feels that they are sick or disabled, while they are fit and healthy. As a matter of fact it is the awe of God which has overtaken them and which has not struck the others. It is the fright of Hereafter which has refrained them from unnecessary mundane practices. Those who do not have faith in God and keep themselves engrossed in worldly affairs suffer only with disappointment (because they do not get the desired result in this world, and lose their share in the Hereafter as well). And those who regard sustenance as the only reward from Allah Ta'ālā and neglect practising morality have indeed very little understanding and for them there is great punishment. (Ibn Kathīr)

The third characteristic:

وَاِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجٰهِلُوْنَ قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا (And when the ignorant people speak to them, they reply peacefully - 25:63): It should be kept in mind that the word "ignorant" in this verse refers to a person who acts like an ignorant person, notwithstanding that he might be a knowledgeable person. Also, the word سَلَام (peace) is not used here in its customary sense of greeting, but for any word causing peace. What is meant here is that in response to ignorance they keep composed and answer with calmness so that others are not offended and they do not commit a sin. The same explanation is put forward by Sayyidnā Mujāhid and Muqātil etc. The intended meaning is that they do not avenge from those who talk to them like ignorant people.

The Fourth Characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبِيْتُوْنَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَّقِيَامًا (and those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord, - 25:64). Special mention of night worship is made here firstly, because this time being a time of rest, requires extra effort, and secondly because it rules out the possibility of showing one's worship to others. The idea is to express that they spend their day and night in submission before Allah during the day by teaching and

spreading religious tenets and struggling in the way of Allah and at night by praying before Him. The sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have extolled the night prayers (تهجد). Tirmidhī has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Remain steadfast to your night prayers as this has been the practice of all righteous people before your time, and this will bring you closer to Allah Ta'ālā and will expiate the evils and keep you away from sins". (Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that one who has offered two or more Rak'ats after 'Isha' prayers is also covered by the verse. (Maẓharī from Bayhaqī) and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ is reported to have observed that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that one who has offered his 'Isha' prayer with congregation would be regarded as having worshipped half the night and the one who has offered Fajr prayer with congregation would be regarded as having offered the other half of the night in prayers. (Aḥmed and Muslim from Maẓharī)

The Fifth Characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ (and those who say, "Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Jahannam - 25:65). It means that despite their constant prayers day and night, these favoured ones do not sit content, but are always fearful of God and keep in mind the Day of Judgement. To that end they keep alive the righteous deeds as well as supplications before Allah.

The Sixth Characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَنْفَقُوْا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوْا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوْا (and those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly - 25:67). That is Allah's blessed servants are neither spendthrifts nor misers but they spend moderately. The words اِسْرَاف (*isrāf,* i.e. extravagance) and إقتار (*iqtār,* i.e. miserliness) are used in the verse for the two opposite traits. *Isrāf* means to cross the limits. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Juraij رحمهم الله تعالى any spending on something sinful, however little it may be, is *isrāf*, while others say that even overspending in the rightful and allowed things which is wasteful would fall under the definition of *isrāf.* It is because any wasteful spending is by itself a sin and hence *isrāf*. Allah Ta'ālā has said اِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِيْنَ كَانُوْٓا اِخْوَانَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ (Surely squanderers are brothers of Satan - 17:27). In this way the latter explanation is also covered in the explanation given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that is any spending on

some sinful thing is إِسْرَاف . (Maẓharī)

إِقْتَار (*iqtār*) means to spend with miserliness. In Islamic jurisprudence it means to be tight fisted where a believer is directed to spend. In case one does not spend at all at a place where he has been directed to spend, then that is the worst situation. This explanation is also given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Qatādah etc. (Maẓharī) Therefore, the message of the verse is that Allah's blessed servants are neither spendthrifts nor misers but in the matter of spending they take the middle path.

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ :

مِنْ فِقْهِ الرَّجُلِ قَصْدُهُ فِيْ مَعِيْشَتِهِ

That is "It is the sagacity of man to adopt the middle path in spending" In another Saying quoted by Sayyidnā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا عال من اقتصد

That is "The person who sticks to the middle path and moderation in spending will never become a destitute and poor". (Imām Aḥmad - Ibn Kathīr)

The Seventh Characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ لَايَدْعُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ (And those who do not invoke any other god alongwith Allah - 25:68). The first six characteristics included the principles of obedience and now the characteristics of disobedience are described. Among these the very first one relates to belief, that is these blessed servants do not associate any one with Allah Ta'ālā in His worship. This point establishes that *shirk* (شِرْك) is the biggest sin of all.

The Eighth and Ninth characteristic

لَا يَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ (do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity - 25:68). This is the description of the major and grave sins pertaining to one's deeds. It is mentioned that Allah's blessed servants do not go even near them; neither they indulge in adultery nor do they kill innocent people. After describing the beliefs and big sins of one's deeds the verse says وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ يَلْقَ اَثَامًا (25:68) that is, whoever will involve himself in the above mentioned sins will get punished accordingly. Abū 'Ubaidah has described the meaning of the word اَثَام (*athām*) in this verse as punishment of sin. But some other commentators have said that اَثَام is

the name of a valley in the Hell which is full of severe and rigorous punishments, and they have quoted a few sayings in support of this contention. (Maẓharī)

The next verse mentions some details of the punishment to be faced by the aforementioned sinners. In the context of these verses it is certain that this chastisement will be exclusive to those who were infidels and also indulged in adultery or homicide. In the first place the phrase يُضٰعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ (The punishment will be doubled for him - 69) cannot be applied on Muslim sinners because they are told both in the Qur'ān and in the Sunnah that they will get only one punishment against a sin. Any increase in the intensity of chastisement will not be in the case of believers. Doubling of chastisement will be exclusive to infidels i.e. the first chastisement will be for infidelity and in case they have also committed sins the chastisement will be doubled. Secondly, it is also mentioned about this chastisement that it will be perpetual (وَيَخْلُدْ فِيْهِ مُهَانًا - 25:69) i.e. the punished will be placed there forever after being disgraced and condemned. On the other hand no believer will be condemned for ever in the Jahannam, no matter how big a sin he has committed. Muslims will be taken out of the Jahannam when they have completed their term there. In brief, those infidels who reject monotheism and also commit adultery and homicide will be awarded doubled chastisement which will increase in intensity and will last forever. In the next verse there is a solace for the above type of sinners in that if they seek Allah's forgiveness and act righteously, then Allah Ta'ālā is expected to change their sins into righteous deeds. In other words, once they have repented on their past sins and accepted Islam, their past sins will be taken away from their record and all that will be left in the record would be nothing but righteous deeds. It is because Allah Ta'ālā has promised that when an infidel accepts Islam, all sins he might have committed during infidelity are pardoned. Hence their previous record which was full of sins and evil deeds will be forgiven and scraped, and will be replaced with a fresh record of good and righteous deeds which they would perform after submitting to Islam. This explanation of conversion of sins into virtues is given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sa'īd Ibn Jubair and Mujāhid رحمهم الله تعالىٰ (Maẓharī).

Ibn Kathīr has given another explanation for conversion of sins into

virtues. He says that when they will remember all those sins which they had committed during the period of their infidelity, they will repent and seek Allah's forgiveness. This act of repentance will replace their sins into virtues. In support of this explanation some traditions have also been quoted.

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللّٰهِ مَتَابًا (And whoever repents and does righteous deeds he turns to Allah truly - 25:71). On the face of it, it looks repetition of the same subject as described in the preceding verse i.e. إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا . But Qurṭubī while quoting Qaffāl has explained that this repentance is different and separate from the repentance described in the previous verse. It is because the previous verse related to deniers of monotheism and infidels who indulged in adultery and homicide and then submitted to Islam. Hence their sins were converted into virtues. But here the second verse speaks about the repentance of the Muslim sinners. This may be explained by the fact that in the previous verse the repentance was combined with the word آمَنَ which means that they accepted Islam whereas in the second verse the word اٰمَنَ is not there, which means that in the second verse the repentance is related to those sinners who had already converted to Islam or that they were Muslims, but by negligence indulged in adultery and homicide. Hence this verse relates to those Muslims who commit sins, but then repent on their folly sincerely and seek Allah's forgiveness and then keep themselves away from sins and evil deeds. Such repentance by the Muslims will be regarded in order and accepted. It should be understood here that the word تَوْبَہ (*taubah*) is used here in conditional clause as well as in principal clause. In the conditional clause it means verbal repentance, and in the principal clause it refers to the practical repentance in the sense of correcting one's deeds. Hence it means that if someone repented on his sins and proved his sincerity by not indulging in those sins again would be regarded as on the right path towards Allah Ta'ālā. As against this the one who repented on his past sins but continued indulging in those sins, is like the one who has not repented.

In brief if a Muslim indulged in a sin by negligence and then realized that he has done wrong and repented and after that kept himself away from the sin, his repentance will be accepted by Allah Ta'ālā, and hopefully he will get the same benefit as described in the first verse i.e.

his sins will be converted into virtues.

Some rules of *taubah* (repentance) from sins had been mentioned during the traits of Allah's favoured servants. The next verses are back to the original subject.

The tenth characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ (And those who do not witness falsehood - 25:72). That is they do not participate in the meetings where lie and falsehood has currency. The biggest falsehood is the *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk,* and the next in order comes the common lie and acts of sin. In other words the blessed and favoured servants of Allah avoid attending such meetings. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that these meetings or assemblies refer to infidels festivals, carnivals and field days; while Sayyidnā Mujāhid and Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanīfah are of the view that they relate to music concerts. According to 'Amr Ibn Qaiṣ they refer to vulgar and cheap dance parties Zuhrī and Imām Mālik term them as liquor drinking parties (Ibn Kathīr). In any case there is no contradiction in all these explanations because all such gatherings come under the definition of assembly of falsehood. The righteous people should avoid such gathering, as even an intentional look at them is tantamount to participation in them. (Maẓharī)

Some commentators have taken the sentence يَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ to mean that they do not give false evidence, which is one of the possible meaning of the word يَشْهَدُوْنَ (The English translation of the sentence given in the text as "do not witness falsehood" has a slight indication to this interpretation also). It is a well known fact that both Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah declare the false evidence as a great sin and an enormous evil. Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ quoting that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that false evidence is the gravest of the major sins.

Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ said that if the offence of giving false evidence is proved against someone, he should be flogged with forty stripes, and then his face be painted black and taken round the market place, and after that put in jail for a long time. (Maẓharī)

The Eleventh Characteristic

وَإِذَا مَرُّوْا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوْا كِرَامًا (and when they pass by the absurd things, Pass by with dignity - 72). That is if by chance they happen to pass by immoral gatherings, they walk away with dignity and grace. In other words as

they do not attend such gatherings intentionally, if they happen to pass by them sometimes by chance they just walk away from there in a dignified manner. That is despite their belief that their evil acts are hateful, they do not take pride or regard themselves superior for not indulging in them. Once Sayyidnā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ happened to pass by an absurd and dissolute gathering, so he did not stop there but simply walked away. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt about this incidence he remarked "Ibn Mas'ūd has become كريم (dignified)" and then recited this verse wherein it is enjoined to walk away from dissolute gatherings with dignity. (Ibn Kathīr)

The Twelveth Characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوْا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَّعُمْيَانًا

And those who, when they are reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall at them as deaf and blind ones - 25:73

That is when the blessed servants of Allah are reminded of His verses and the Hereafter, they do not throw themselves upon them as if they were blind and dumb, but pay heed to them like sober and sensible persons, and act upon them. They do not behave like the ignorants or negligent persons as if they have not seen or listened i.e. not understood the message. Two things are mentioned in this verse. One, to fall at Divine revelation i.e. to listen them with full attention. This is a virtuous and commendable act. Second, to fall at the verses like deaf and dumb people which means to listen to the message but without any purpose or commitment and act in a manner that the real message has not been registered, and even if they follow the Qur'ānic message it is not in line with the practices of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ or their followers. Such people follow their own whims based on hearsay, which is as bad as not following the Divine message.

Self-study of religious precepts is not enough but they need to be acted upon in the light of interpretation given by classic scholars

As it is condemned in the verses under study that Divine message is ignored. It is also pointed out with equal emphasis that it is listened and acted upon without due diligence, that is without comprehending the intent and spirit of the precept and according to one's own sweet will. Ibn Kathīr has reported on the authority of Ibn 'Aun that he inquired from

Hadrat Sha'bī رحمه الله تعالیٰ that if he comes across a people who are in the state of *sajdah* (prostration), whether it is correct for him to join them in *sajdah*. Sha'bī رحمه الله تعالیٰ replied in the negative explaining that it would not be correct for him to join in their prostration unless he finds out the purpose of that act. It is not proper for a believer to join in any action without knowing the purport of that act, rather he should seek to know the purpose behind an act before taking it up for himself. When one has not listened the verse of prostration, nor does he know the reason for their prostration it is not allowed for him to go in prostration.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that there is a new tendency among the younger generation and modern educated people to study the Qur'ān but to achieve this purpose they often deem it enough to study the Qur'ān and try to understand it through the translations of the Qur'ān on their own. This practice being against the correct principles of learning something, often makes them fall into misconceptions. It is a well-settled fact that education and knowledge cannot be imparted only through books unless guidance of a teacher is available for explaining the intricacies of the subject which normally go unnoticed by an ordinary reader. It is rather strange why people feel that this basic rule does not apply to Qur'ān and its related subjects and try to indulge in interpreting the Holy Book according to their own wishes. This type of study and interpreting Qur'ān on one's own without the help and guidance of a well qualified teacher also falls under the purview of this verse i.e. "they do not throw themselves upon as if they were blind and dumb". May Allah lead us to the right path.

The Thirteenth Characteristic

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ اَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ اَعْيُنٍ وَّاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِمَامًا

> And those who say, "Our Lord, Give us, from our spouses and our children, coolness of eyes and make us heads of the God-fearing. (25:74)

This verse contains a prayer for one's spouses and children. According to the explanation put forward by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالیٰ one can draw solace from his dear ones (wife and children) if they submit to the way of Allah. That is the true bliss for a man, and if the good health and well being of the wife and children is also added to this, it is also in order.

What is alluded here is that the righteous servants of God do not care about correcting themselves only, but also take care of the virtuous actions of their children and spouse, and keep trying for their improvement, and it is a part of their efforts that they pray Allah to make them take the right path. The second sentence of this verse says وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِمَامًا (and make us heads of the God-fearing - 25:74) Apparently this is a prayer for getting a high status and a source of pride, which is forbidden by other injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says at another place" تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُرِيْدُوْنَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا that is "As for that ultimate Abode (the Hereafter), We assign it to those who intend neither haughtiness on earth nor mischief (28:83). And the (best) end is for the God-fearing - 28:83". Hence, some scholars have commented about this sentence of the verse that everyone is the head or Imām of his family. Thus, if his family members become God fearing, he will automatically be their head or Imām. Therefore, the final outcome is that prayer was not meant for personal aggrandizement, but for the family members to follow the right path. Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī رحمه الله تعالى has also explained about this verse that the prayer contained in it is not meant for a high position or authority for oneself but to request the grant of such a disposition that people try to emulate it in religious deeds and actions, and that it be of benefit to others and thus might fetch the praying people some of its reward. And Sayyidnā Makḥūl Shāmi رحمه الله تعالى has elucidated that the purpose of the prayer is to implore an exalted status of God consciousness that even the God fearing people may also draw inspiration to follow that. Qurṭubī has narrated both these explanations and then commented that the net outcome of both is the same, that the desire for an elated position or high office in religious affairs for attaining reward in the Hereafter is not improper; rather it is allowed. On the other hand in verse لَا يُرِيْدُوْنَ عُلُوًّا (who intend neither haughtiness - 28:83) the desire and search for worldly exaltation and authority has been condemned. Here the description about the main traits of 'Ibād-ur-Raḥmān or the perfect believers has been completed. Now their rewards and degrees of exaltation in the Hereafter are related.

اُولٰٓئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ (Such people will be rewarded with the high place - 75) The literal meaning of غُرْفَه (*ghrfah*) is upper story. The righteous people having special closeness to Allah will be given high chambers in Paradise

which will look like stars to common people. (al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Maẓharī)

It is narrated in Musnād of Aḥmad, Bayhaqī, Tirmidhī and Ḥākim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Mālik al-Ash'arī that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "In Paradise there will be such upper Houses that their interior could be seen from outside and the exterior from inside". Ṣaḥābah inquired from him as to who will live in them. Then he ﷺ replied "Those who keep their speech clean and soft, greet every Muslim, feed the poor, and offer Tahajjud prayers at night when others are sleeping." (Maẓharī)

وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَّسَلٰمًا (And will be received therein with prayers of their eternal life and peace - 25:75). That is beside other boons of Paradise they will have the honour that angels will greet and felicitate them.

Upto this point the traits and deeds of the sincere believers and their rewards and recompense were described. Then in the last verse the infidels and disbelievers have been warned again of the chastisement on which the Sūrah is concluded.

قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّى لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ (Say (O Prophet) My Lord will never care about you, if you will not invoke Him - 25:77). Different versions are given in the interpretation of this verse, but the one given in the text above is the simplest and straight forward; that is you would have no value or importance before God if you do not call Him and pray to Him. It is because the very purpose of man's creation is that he should worship Allah as mentioned in the verse وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ (I have not created Jinn and mankind except to worship Me - 51:56). After declaring the principle that man has no value and importance without worship, the infidels and disbelievers are addressed: فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ that is "since you have belied (the truth)" you are of no consequence before Him." فَسَوْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِزَامًا (the punishment will be inseparable from you - 77). That is now this rejection and disbelief have become an integral part of your being and will keep clinging to you until you are thrown in the Fire of Hell forever.

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Al-Furqān

Ends here.

Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā'

(The Poets)

Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' was revealed in Makkah and it has 227 Verses and 11 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

طٰسٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ اَلَّا يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اِنْ نَّشَاْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اٰيَةً فَظَلَّتْ اَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خٰضِعِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ مُحْدَثٍ اِلَّا كَانُوْا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوْا فَسَيَاْتِيْهِمْ اَنْبٰٓؤُا مَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الْاَرْضِ كَمْ اَنْبَتْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ ع

Ṭā sīn mīm. [1] These are the verses of the manifest Book. [2] Seemingly you are going to let yourself collapse in grief because they do not believe. [3] If We so will, We can send down to them a sign from the sky before which their necks will stay bent in submission. [4] And there comes to them no new message from the Raḥmān, but they become averse to it. [5] Thus they rejected (the Truth); so soon will come to them the real descriptions of what they used to ridicule. [6] Have they not looked at the earth, how many of the noble pairs (of vegetation) We have caused to grow therein? [7] Surely, in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to

believe [8] **And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [9]

Commentary

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ (Seemingly you are going to let yourself collapse in grief - 26:3). The word باخع (*bākhi'*)is derived from بخع (*bakh'*)which means to reach up to Bikhā', an artery of the neck, while slaughtering. In this verse *bāki'* is used in the sense of putting oneself into trouble and toil. 'Allāmah 'Askarī has said, 'Although at such places the sentence appears to be informative but in fact it means to prohibit or prevent'. What it conveys is that, 'O Messenger, do not be so despondent because of your people's disbelief and rejection of Islam that you cause yourself to collapse'. One learns from this verse that even if it is apparent that a disbeliever would not convert to Islam, still it is not right to stop preaching to him. The second thing one learns is that the efforts one makes for a certain objective must be balanced and moderate, and if someone is adamant not to be guided to the right path, one should not be over-grieved.

إِنْ نَّشَأْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اٰيَةً فَظَلَّتْ أَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خٰضِعِيْنَ

If We so will, We can send down to them a sign from the sky before which their necks will stay bent in submission. - 26:4

Allamāh Zamakhsharī has explained that the real intent of the text is to say that the disbelievers themselves will stay in submission, but the act of submission is attributed in the verse to their "necks", so that the initial object of submission is pinpointed, because yielding or bowing in humility initially appears on the neck. The substance of the message of this verse is that Allah Ta'ālā also has full authority and control to evince any sign of His Oneness and Omnipotence which brings forth the religious injunctions and the Divine Truth in such a self-evident manner that no one would have the ability to reject it. But the wisdom demands that these injunctions and the understanding of God are not made self-evident but remain visionary, so that they are dependent on deliberations and pondering. This pondering and deliberation is actually the test of man on which the reward and punishment is adjudged. Acceptance of self-evident things is a natural and involuntary phenomenon which lacks the quality of deliberate obedience. (Qurṭubī)

زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ (noble pair - 26:7). The word زَوْج (*zawj*) literally means a pair. That is why man and woman, and male and female are called *Zawj*. Many species of trees have male and female among them. On this basis they can also be called Zawj (زَوْج). Sometimes the word *Zawj* is also used for a special kind. On the basis of this meaning all species of trees can be called *Zawj*. The meaning of Karīm is a nice and favourite thing.

Verses 10 - 33

وَاِذْ نَادٰى رَبُّكَ مُوْسٰٓى اَنِ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۭ اَلَا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَضِيْقُ صَدْرِىْ وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِىْ فَاَرْسِلْ اِلٰى هٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُمْ عَلَىَّ ذَنْۢبٌ فَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ فَاذْهَبَا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُّسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاْتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُوْلَآ اِنَّا رَسُوْلُ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَنْ اَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِيْنَا وَلِيْدًا وَّلَبِثْتَ فِيْنَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفَعَلْتَ فَعْلَتَكَ الَّتِىْ فَعَلْتَ وَاَنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَآ اِذًا وَّاَنَا مِنَ الضَّاۗلِّيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِىْ رَبِّىْ حُكْمًا وَّجَعَلَنِىْ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَىَّ اَنْ عَبَّدْتَّ بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهٗٓ اَلَا تَسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَاۗىِٕكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ رَسُوْلَكُمُ الَّذِىْٓ اُرْسِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ لَىِٕنِ اتَّخَذْتَ اِلٰهًا غَيْرِىْ لَاَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُوْنِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ اَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَىْءٍ مُّبِيْنٍ

﴿٣٠﴾ قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِۦٓ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَأَلْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا
هِىَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُۥ فَإِذَا هِىَ بَيْضَآءُ لِلنَّٰظِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

And (remember) when your Lord called Mūsā saying, "Go to the transgressing people, [10] the people of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Do they not fear Allah?" [11] He (Mūsā) said, "My Lord, I fear they will belie me. [12] And my heart gets straitened and my tongue is not fluent; so send for Hārūn. [13] And they have (made) a charge of offence against me and I fear they will kill me;" [14] He (Allah) said, "Never! So go, both of you, with Our signs. We are with you, listening. [15] So, the two of you reach the Fir'aun and say, 'We both are messengers of the Lord of all the worlds, [16] (sent with the message) that you must send the children of Isrā'īl with us". [17]

He (the Pharaoh) said, "Did we not nourish you among us as a child? And you remained among us for years, [18] and you did that deed of yours which you did while you were among the ungrateful. [19] He said, "I did that at that time when I was one of the unaware people. [20] Then I fled from you when I feared you. Thereafter my Lord granted wisdom to me and made me among the messengers. [21] And this is the favor with which you are obliging me - that you have enslaved the children of Isrā'īl." [22] The Pharaoh said, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" [23] He (Mūsā) said, "Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever there is between them, if you are to believe" [24] He (the Pharaoh) said to those around him, "Are you not hearing?" [25] He (Mūsā) said, "Your Lord and the Lord of your early forefathers" [26] He (the Pharaoh) said, "Your messenger who is sent to you is a mad man indeed." [27] He (Mūsā) said, "Lord of the East and the West and whatever there is between them, if you are to understand" [28] He (the Pharaoh) said, "If you take to a God other than me, I will certainly put you among those imprisoned." [29] He (Mūsā) said "Will you (do this) even if I bring to you something evident?" [30] He said, "Then bring it, if you are one of the truthful." [31] So, he threw down his staff, and in no time it was a serpent, clearly visible, [32] and he drew out his hand, and right then it was a white light to the onlookers. [33]

Commentary

Request for favourable conditions for obedience is not tantamount to making excuses

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّيٓ أَخَافُ أَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَضِيْقُ صَدْرِيْ وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِيْ فَأَرْسِلْ إِلٰى هٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿١٤﴾

He (Mūsā) said, "My Lord, I fear they will belie me. [12] And my heart gets straitened and my tongue is not fluent; so send for Harun. [13] And they have a charge of offence against me and I fear they will kill me;" [14]

This verse indicates that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام requested Allah to provide him with some resources to help them in carrying out his mission. It leads to the principle that so far as the objective is to obey Allah's command, praying for some helping resources cannot be regarded as seeking ruses and excuses to escape from the required act. The request of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was only to facilitate the implementation of Allah's command which is quite lawful.

The meaning of the word dalal used for Sayyidnā Mūsā

قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَآ إِذًا وَّأَنَا مِنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ

He said, "I did that at that time when I was one of the unaware people. (26:20)

This was the answer of Mūsā عليه السلام to the objection of the Pharaoh that Mūsā عليه السلام had killed an Egyptian. The gist of the answer is that it was not a deliberate murder; in fact the Egyptian was killed by mistake, because Mūsā عليه السلام had only struck him with a blow which, by accident, caused his death. The word used, by the present verse, for this mistake is derived from ضلال (*ḍalāl*) which is commonly used for intentional error. But the word is also used for 'unawareness' (which includes unintentional mistakes) It is this meaning that is intended here. This interpretation is supported by Qatādah and Ibn Zaid رحمهم الله تعالى.

It is impossible for man to comprehend fully the entity and reality of the magnificence of Allah Ta'ālā

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

Pharaoh said, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" (26:23)

This verse proves that it is not possible to know the exact reality of Allah's Being. Since the Pharaoh had asked a question regarding Allah Ta'ālā's intrinsic-self and reality, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام instead of giving a direct answer to his query, described the attributes of Allah Ta'ālā in reply. He hinted in his reply that it is not possible for a man to perceive the essence and reality of Allah Ta'ālā. Hence, it was a futile question. (Rūḥ)

اَنْ اَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِیْٓ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ

That you must send the children of Isra'īl with us". (26:17)

Banī Isrā'il were the residents of Syria. They wanted to go back to their land but the Pharaoh would not let them. This way four hundred years had passed and they were living in his bondage like slaves. At that time they were six hundred and thirty thousand in number. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام when presented the message of Truth to the Pharaoh, he also asked him to stop all the cruelties he had perpetrated over Banī Isrā'il and to let them go to their homeland. (Qurṭubī)

An example of prophetic dialectic

Discussion and debate among two different persons or group of people having divergent views has been in vogue since the time immemorial. Such debates are called مُناظرہ *munāẓarah* (dialectics) in conventional terms. But such dialectics have been reduced to a game of win or lose. People regard the outcome of dialectics should be to come out winner, even though one knows that he is on the wrong. Despite the knowledge of being on the wrong one must keep on pressing his point of view, and use the intelligence to throw in all sorts of arguments to prove his point as correct. Similarly, even if the opponents point is correct, it must be rejected with full force. In contrast to this attitude Islam has given a middle of the road stance, and set out its rules and regulations, thus making it a useful tool for preaching and reform.

A simple example of this can be seen in the above verses. When Sayyidnā Mūsā and Hārūn علیهم السلام conveyed the invitation of Truth to the mighty the Pharaoh, who was claimant of being god, in his court, he began the opposing conversation with two questions relating to the person of Mūsā's عليه السلام. When a sharp opponent is not properly equipped with the

correct arguments, he normally tries to switch the conversation towards the person of the addressee in order to find faults with him. This tactic is employed to embarrass the opponent and to make him look small before the audience. Hence, the Pharaoh also came out with two such points. First, 'We have brought you up in our household and have done so many favours to you. So, how can you have the face to speak before us.' Second, 'You have killed an Egyptian for no fault of his. This is not only cruelty but also ingratitude toward those among whom you are raised to your manhood. You have killed one from among us.' Now see the prophetic reply of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and how he handled the two subjects. In the first place he changed the sequence of the topics in that he brought up the case of the Egyptian first which the Pharaoh had raised latter. The wisdom in changing the sequence appears to be that in the Egyptian's case there was a weakness on his part, but he preferred to take that first, unlike present day tactics where one tries to avoid a direct reply to confuse the issue. But he, being the messenger of Allah, had nothing to hide, so while replying he accepted his weakness, and did not care at all what people in the opposition would think on acceptance of his mistake, and hence, might take it as acceptance of defeat. This course of action was totally contrary to present day tactics when people try to mix up their weakness in a manner that it is camouflaged.

Although Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had accepted his fault while replying to the Pharaoh that it was his misjudgment when he hit the Egyptian and as a result he died, yet he made it very clear that he did not intend to kill him. His intention was right which unfortunately resulted in the wrong. The purpose of his hitting the Egyptian was to prevent him from harming the Isrā'īlī but in the process he died, which was not the intention. This act of his, despite being wrong, does not conflict with his claim to be a prophet or contradicts its veracity. So, he said 'that he realized his mistake and left the city for the fear of being caught. Then Allah was kind to him and honoured him with the prophethood.

Now the point to ponder is that at that time Mūsā عليه السلام could have adopted the simple and straightforward course and have claimed that the Egyptian deserved death, and would have charged him with such accusations for which his killing was the right action. There was no one present at the time of the incident, so no one could have contradicted him.

Anyone else in his place would have certainly taken this course of action. But here it was the resolute messenger of Allah who was the truth personified and who regarded expression of truth and veracity and the declaration of fact as his victory. He accepted his guilt in the packed court of the foe and in doing that also countered any possibility of doubt on his prophethood.

After that he turned to the second point regarding his upbringing in the Pharaoh's house, upon which the Pharaoh had stressed to remind his favour to him. Mūsā عليه السلام asked him to ponder over his position as, being an Israelite, he had no occasion to reach the royal place of the Pharaoh. It was the cruelty of the Pharaoh that compelled the mother of Musa عليه السلام to throw her baby into the river, then it was by chance that the Pharaoh picked him up, and in reality it was a wise arrangement made by Allah, that the child for the fear of whom the Pharaoh had slaughtered thousands of children, was caused to be nourished by the same the Pharaoh. But in any case, the real cause of his upbringing in the home of the Pharaoh was the cruelty exercised by him against the Israelites. Musa عليه السلام pointing out to this fact, invited the Pharaoh to ponder whether this was really a favour with which he was obliging him. It is obvious that this prophetic address left a positive and convincing impression on the minds of people present there, and they were convinced that Mūsā عليه السلام was not the sort of person who would make excuses, and that he would say nothing but the truth. After that when they saw the miracles, their view was confirmed further. At that time although the Pharaoh did not admit the truth, yet he was so overwhelmed and apprehensive that just two persons without having the support of a third, would turn him and his people out of their land and country.

This is what is known as God gifted awe of truth, veracity and reality. The contentions and dialectics of Allah's messengers are also full of truth, veracity and wishing well for the addressee. That is how they become so appealing to people and convince the biggest defiant.

Verses 34 - 51

قَالَ لِلْمَلَاِ حَوْلَهٗۤ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۳۴﴾ يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنْ

اَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهٖ ۖ فَمَاذَا تَاْمُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَرْجِهْ وَاَخَاهُ وَابْعَثْ
فِى الْمَدَآئِنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ يَاْتُوْكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَجُمِعَ
السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيْقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَّقِيْلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ اَنْتُمْ
مُّجْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ اِنْ كَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
فَلَمَّا جَآءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوْا لِفِرْعَوْنَ اَئِنَّ لَنَا لَاَجْرًا اِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ
الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَاِنَّكُمْ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ
مُّوْسٰٓى اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَاَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوْا
بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَاَلْقٰى مُوْسٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِىَ
تَلْقَفُ مَا يَاْفِكُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَاُلْقِىَ السَّحَرَةُ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا
بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ رَبِّ مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ
اَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِىْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ۚ فَلَسَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۵ لَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّلَاُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوْا لَا ضَيْرَ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّا نَطْمَعُ اَنْ
يَّغْفِرَلَنَا رَبُّنَا خَطٰيٰنَآ اَنْ كُنَّآ اَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾

He (the Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him "This man is certainly an expert sorcerer". [34] **He wants to expel you from your land with his sorcery. So what do you suggest?"** [35] **They said, "Leave him and his brother alone for a while and send to the cities men to collect,** [36] **so that they bring to you every highly expert sorcerer."** [37]

So the sorcerers were assembled for the appointed time of a known day, [38] **and it was said to the people, "Would you assemble,** [39] **so that we may follow the sorcerers if they are victorious?"** [40] **So, when the sorcerers came, they said to the Pharaoh, "Will there really be a reward for us, if we are the victorious?"** [41] **He said, "Yes, and of course, you will then be among the**

closer ones." [42]

Mūsā said to them, "Throw you down what you are to throw." [43] **So they threw down their ropes and their staffs and said, "By the majesty of the Pharaoh we are going to Prevail definitely."** [44] **Then Mūsā threw down his staff, and in no time it started swallowing the falsehood they invented.** [45] **So the sorcerers were made (by the truth they saw) to fall down in prostration.** [46] **They said, "We have believed in the Lord of the worlds,** [47] **the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn."** [48]

He (the Pharaoh) said, "you believed in him before I permit you. Surely, he (Mūsā) is the chief of you all who has taught you sorcery. So you will soon know (your fate). I will cut off your hands and feet from different sides and will crucify you all together. [49] **They said, "There is no harm. We are to return to our Lord.** [50] **We really hope that our Lord will forgive us our faults, as we are the first of the believers."** [51]

Commentary.

اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ

Mūsā said to them, "Throw you down what you are to throw." (26:43)

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام said to the magicians 'You show the magic you wish to show'. With a cursory look one might be inclined to think that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام ordered them to perform their magic. But with a little deep thinking it becomes clear that actually it was not an order from Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to show magic, but the real intention was to demonstrate the fallacy of magic. This demonstration was not possible without the magic shown by them. Therefore, he asked them to show their tricks or magic. It is exactly like a *zindīq* (an extreme heretic)is asked to put forward his arguments, so that they may be countered. It is obvious that such an invitation cannot be treated as an acceptance of infidelity.

بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ (By the majesty of the Pharaoh - 26:44). This was an expression of pledge from the magicians, which was in vogue in the olden times. It is unfortunate that similar oaths have now become common

among the Muslims as well, which are even more evil and vile, for instance, 'by the king,' 'by the head of yours,' 'by the beard of yours,' 'by the grave of your father' etc. It is not permitted to make an oath of this nature under the Islamic law (because swearing in the name of someone other than Allah is a sin). Rather, it will not be wrong to say that swearing a true oath in this way is as much sinful as swearing a false oath in the name of Allah. (Rūḥ)

قَالُوْا لَاضَيْرَ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ

They said, "There is no harm. We are to return to our Lord. (26:50)

When the Pharaoh threatened the magicians to kill them, and to cut their limbs and to crucify them, the magicians replied rather indifferently, the gist of their reply was, 'You do whatever you can. We shall lose nothing. Even if we are killed we will go back to our Lord, where there is nothing but comfort'.

It is worth noting here that the magicians who had involved all their lives practicing the sinful sorcery and who believed in the Pharaoh's claim to be a god, rather, used to worship him, pronounced faith in Allah before that tyrant and despotic king and the entire nation. This was in itself something most astonishing and courageous, but it was not just the pronouncement of faith in Allah, but a demonstration of such deep devotion as if they could see the Dooms Day and the Hereafter before their eyes. The blessings and bounties of the Hereafter were within their sight, for which they raised themselves over and above any punishment or torment of this world, and said فَاقْضِ مَآ اَنْتَ قَاضٍ that is ' You do whatever you are to do (20:72). We are not going back from our faith'. This in fact was also a miracle of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ, which was no less than the miracle of the staff and the luminous hand. Many incidents of similar nature have also occurred with our Holy Prophet ﷺ. In one such incident a drastic change had occurred in a seventy years old infidel in that within a minute he not only converted to Islam, but was ready to lay down his life to become a martyr.

Verses 52 - 68

وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ اَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْٓ اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَاَرْسَلَ

فِرْعَوْنُ فِي الْمَدَآئِنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيْلُوْنَ
﴿٥٤﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَآئِظُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاِنَّا لَجَمِيْعٌ حٰذِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾
فَاَخْرَجْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَّكُنُوْزٍ وَّمَقَامٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾
كَذٰلِكَ ط وَاَوْرَثْنٰهَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاَتْبَعُوْهُمْ مُّشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾
فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَ الْجَمْعٰنِ قَالَ اَصْحٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ
كَلَّا ج اِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّيْ سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنِ اضْرِبْ
بِّعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ ط فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ
اَزْلَفْنَا ثَمَّ الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَاَنْجَيْنَا مُوْسٰى وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗٓ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾
ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ط وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٦٨﴾

And We revealed to Mūsā saying, "Make My slaves travel at night. You will be pursued." [52] **So the Pharaoh sent into the cities (his) men to muster (people)** [53] **saying, "These are a small band,** [54] **and indeed they are enraging us,** [55] **and we are a host, well-armed."** [56]

So We expelled them from gardens and springs [57] **and from treasures and a noble abode.** [58] **Thus it was. And We made the children of Isrā'īl inherit all these.** [59] **So they (the people of the Pharaoh) pursued them (the people of Mūsā) at the time of sunrise.** [60] **And when the two hosts saw each other, the companions of Mūsā said, "Surely we are overtaken."** [61] **He said, "Never! Indeed with me is my Lord. He will guide me."** [62] **So We revealed to Mūsā saying, "Strike the sea with your staff." So it was severed apart, and each part became like a big mountain.** [63] **Then We brought others close to that place.** [64] **And We saved Mūsā and all those with him.** [65] **Then we drowned the others.** [66] **Surely, in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe.** [67] **And your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [68]

Commentary

وَاَوۡرَثۡنٰهَا بَنِیۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِیۡلَ

And We made the children of Isrā'īl inherit all these. [59]

Apparently it is elucidated in this verse that Banī Isrā'īl were made the owners of all the material wealth and property left by the people of the Pharaoh after their drowning. But there is a historical issue involved in this statement. The issue is that many Qur'ānic verses indicate the Banī Isrā'īl did not return to Egypt after the drowning of the Pharaoh's people. As a matter of fact they went back towards their original home, the holy land of Syria. There they were commanded to fight (wage *jihād*) with an infidel nation in order to enter their city. Banī Isrā'īl refused to comply with this command, as a punishment of which the open plain where they were camping was made a natural prison for them. They could not come out of that plain and spent forty years over there. It was in that place, which is also known as a valley of Ṭīḥ (Sinai), where their two prophets, Sayyidnā Mūsā and Hārūn علیهم السلام, died. Even after these incidents it is not reported in the books of history that Banī Isrā'īl as a nation or in collective form had entered Egypt, which might prove that they had taken possession of the wealth and property of the Pharaoh's people. Tafsīr Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī has reproduced two explanations on the authority of eminent commentators, Sayyidnā Ḥasan and Qatādah رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین. Sayyidnā Ḥasan ﷺ has explained that the verse in question does have a mention that Banī Isrā'īl were made the heirs of the property of the Pharaoh's people, but it does not say that this had happened immediately after the death of the Pharaoh. If the Banī Isrā'īl entered Egypt some forty or fifty years after the incident of the valley of Ṭīḥ, there is no inconsistency in the verse. As for the argument that their collective entry into Egypt is not proved historically, it is not worth taking any notice, because the history of that period was written by Jews and Christians and is full of distortions. There is absolutely no need for interpreting the Qur'ānic verse differently for bringing it in line with the history, whose authenticity itself is questionable.

Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ has explained the situation in another way. He says that although all the Qur'ānic verses which have quoted this incident, for instance, verses 128 and 137 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf, 5 of Sūrah Al-Qaṣṣaṣ, 25 to 28 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān, and the verse under reference

of Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā', invite the attention to the point that Banī Isrā'īl were given the custody of that very wealth and property which the people of the Pharaoh had left in Egypt, for which it was necessary for the Banī Isrā'īl to return to Egypt to take possession. But all these verses can be interpreted to mean that Banī Isrā'īl were given the wealth and property equal and similar to that which was possessed by the Pharaoh's people. For this it was not necessary that the same lands and wealth of Egypt are given to Banī Isrā'īl. These bounties might have been granted in Syria. This interpretation is more likely in the verse of Sūrah Al-A'raf where the land possessed by Banī Isrā'īl is referred to by the words, الَّتِىْ بَارَكْنَا فِيْهَا (i.e. the land blessed by Us) because the word Bāraknā is used for the land of Syria in many verses of the Qur'ān. Therefore, Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ has opined that it is not correct to attribute Qur'ānic verses toward something which is in conflict with the history. The gist of the whole explanation is that if it is established through proved facts that Banī Isrā'īl did not occupy the land of Egypt at any time after the death of the Pharaoh, then according to explanation of Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ the land of Syria is purported for the wealth and property which was granted to Banī Isrā'īl. (Only God knows best)

قَالَ اَصْحٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُوْنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ اِنَّ مَعِىَ رَبِّىْ سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿۶۲﴾

(The Companions of Mūsā said: "Surely we are overtaken." He said, "Never! Indeed with me is my Lord. He will guide me - 26:61,62.

When the Pharaoh's army, which was in their pursuit, reached right behind them, all the people of Banī Isrā'īl called out 'We are caught'. And there was little doubt in their nabbing as the river was in front of them and the Pharaoh's enormous army behind them. Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was fully aware of the situation, but his belief in the promise of Allah was unshaken like a rock. He, therefore, replied firmly that they will never be caught. The reasoning for this he gave اِنَّ مَعِىَ رَبِّىْ سَيَهْدِيْنِ (62) "Indeed with me is my Lord. He will guide me." Such are the moments for the test of faith, when Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was not terror stricken at all, as if he was seeing for himself the way out. Almost the same thing happened with Holy Prophet ﷺ at the time of migration while hiding in the cave of Thaur. The enemy had reached right at the opening of the cave in his pursuit. In fact they were so close that they could have seen him if they

had looked down towards their toes. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ got alarmed a little, but Holy Prophet ﷺ said exactly the same thing لَاتَحْزَنْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَنَا 'Do not grieve, Allah is surely with us' (9:40). It is worth noting in the two incidents that while Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ said to his Ummah in order to console them اِنَّ مَعِیَ رَبِّیْ 'With me is my Lord', Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ in reply 'Allah is with us (two)'. It is a special privilege of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ that his followers are also honoured by the company of Allah when they are with their Rasūl.

Verses 69 - 104

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾
قَالُوْا نَعْبُدُ اَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عٰكِفِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُوْنَكُمْ
اِذْ تَدْعُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ اَوْ يَنْفَعُوْنَكُمْ اَوْ يَضُرُّوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا
كَذٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ اَنْتُمْ
وَاٰبَآؤُكُمُ الْاَقْدَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيْٓ اِلَّا رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾
الَّذِيْ خَلَقَنِيْ فَهُوَ يَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْ هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِيْ وَيَسْقِيْنِ ﴿٧٩﴾
وَاِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِيْنِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَالَّذِيْ يُمِيْتُنِيْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْنِ ﴿٨١﴾
وَالَّذِيْٓ اَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لِيْ خَطِيْٓئَتِيْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٨٢﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ
حُكْمًا وَّاَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِّيْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي
الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِنْ وَّرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاغْفِرْ لِاَبِيْٓ
اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَا تُخْزِنِيْ يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ يَوْمَ
لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَّلَا بَنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ اَتَى اللّٰهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾
وَاُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيْمُ لِلْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾
وَقِيْلَ لَهُمْ اَيْنَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ هَلْ
يَنْصُرُوْنَكُمْ اَوْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَكُبْكِبُوْا فِيْهَا هُمْ وَالْغَاوٗنَ ﴿٩٤﴾

وَجُنُوْدُ اِبْلِيْسَ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالُوْا وَهُمْ فِيْهَا يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾
تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنَّا لَفِیْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ اِذْ نُسَوِّيْكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿٩٨﴾ وَمَآ اَضَلَّنَآ اِلاَّ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِيْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾
وَلاَ صَدِيْقٍ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَلَوْ اَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
﴿١٠٢﴾ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَاِنَّ
رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

And recite before them the narrative of Ibrāhīm, [69] **when he said to his father and to his people, "What do you worship?"** [70] **They said, "We worship idols, and stay devoted to them."** [71] **He said, "Do they listen to you when you call** [72] **(them) or do they bring benefit to you or harm** [73]**?" They said, "No, but we have found our fathers doing like this."** [74] **He said, "Have you then ever considered what you have been worshipping,** [75] **you and your ancient fathers,** [76] **they all are an enemy to me, except the Lord of the worlds,** [77] **Who created me, then guides me,** [78] **and Who feeds me and gives me drink,** [79] **and when I become sick, He heals me,** [80] **and who will make me die, then will give me life,** [81] **and who, I hope, will forgive my fault on the Day of Retribution.** [82] **O my Lord, give me wisdom and join me with the righteous,** [83] **and destine for me a truthful description among the next generations.** [84] **And make me among those who will inherit the Garden of Bliss,** [85] **and forgive my father. Indeed he was among those who went astray.** [86] **And do not put me to disgrace on the Day when all will be raised to life,** [87] **the Day when neither wealth will be of any use (to any one) nor sons,** [88] **except to one who will come to Allah with a sound heart,** [89] **and the Paradise will be brought near to the God-fearing** [90] **and the Hell will be fully uncovered for the perverse,** [91] **and it will be said to them, 'Where is that which you used to worship** [92] **beside Allah? Can they help you or help themselves?'** [93] **So they (their false gods) will be thrown on their faces into it - they and the erring people** [94] **and the**

entire army of Iblīs, all together. [95] **They will say when they will be quarreling with each other,** [96] **'By Allah, we were in open error** [97] **when we used to equate you with the Lord of the worlds,** [98] **and none misguided us except the sinners.** [99] **Now we have neither any intercessors** [100] **nor any true friend.** [101] **Would that we have a chance to return whereby we become among the believers'!"** [102]

Surely, in this there is a sign, [103] **and most of them are not to believe. And your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [104]

Commentary

وَاجْعَلْ لِّیْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِی الْاٰخِرِیْنَ

And destine for me a truthful description among the next generations. (26:84)

The word لِسَان (*lisān*, which literally means tongue) is used in this verse in the sense of description and 'for me' means 'for my benefit. Thus meaning of the prayer is 'O Allah, grant me such delectable ways and nice signs that others may follow until the Dooms Day, and they remember me with good words and nice attributes'. (Ibn Kathīr and Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī) Allah Ta'ālā has accepted the supplication of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. All, including Jews, Christians and even the disbelievers of Makkah, have feelings of love and affection for the creed of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and attribute themselves to it. Although their ways are in conflict with those of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, based on infidelity and polytheism, but they claim to be following his ways. As for the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they rightly claim to be on the ways of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and feel proud of it.

Love for being praised is contemptible but allowed with certain conditions

Love and aspiration for being praised and respected by others is contemptible under Islamic law. The Holy Qur'ān has made the bounties of the Hereafter dependent on desisting from the love for being praised by saying تِلْکَ الدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِیْنَ لَا یُرِیْدُوْنَ عُلُوًّا فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا (As for that Ultimate Abode (the Hereafter) We assign it to those who intend neither being high on earth nor mischief - 28:83) In the present verse (84) the supplication of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام for his praise and eulogy by the

coming generations apparently looks like a wish for being praised. But if the wordings of the verse are examined carefully, it would become quite evident that it was not the love for being praised, but the real purpose of the supplication was to invoke the Divine help for performing such righteous deeds which could help him in the Hereafter. Moreover, others should also get attracted towards the righteous deeds by following his example, and so should the posterity. By declaring the love for being praised as unlawful and contemptible the Holy Qur'ān and hadith actually meant the love for mundane position of importance and profit which is not the case in the prayer of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام .

Imām Tirmidhī and Nasa'ī have related on the authority of Sayyidnā Ka'b ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه that Holy Prophet ﷺ once said that 'If two hungry wolfs are let loose in a herd of goats, they would not do so much damage to the herd as two traits damage the faith of a man. One is the love for wealth and the other is the aspiration for being praised and respected'. *(Ṭabrānī from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and Bazzār from Abū Hurairah).*

Dailamī has reproduced a narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه with a weak chain of narrators that the love for praise and worldly status makes a man blind and deaf. All these aḥādīth refer to the love that has mundane considerations, or for which one has to indulge in sin or negligence in the matter of faith. When this is not the case, aspiration for praise and high position is not contemptible. It is reported in a *ḥadīth* that Holy Prophet ﷺ himself had made the following supplication: اللّٰهُمّ اجعلنی فی عینی صغیرا وفی اعین النّاس کبیرا that is "Ya Allah, make me insignificant and disdain in my own sight, but make me great in the eyes of people". Here also the purpose of making great in the eyes of people is that people emulate him in his righteous deeds. That is why Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالیٰ has said that the one who is in fact virtuous and pious is required only to avoid making deliberate efforts to present himself as pious in the eyes of people, otherwise, if he loves to be praised by people, it is not contemptible.

Ibn 'Arabī has said that it is evident from this verse that the desire for a righteous deed which results in people's praise is allowed. Imām Ghazzāli رحمه الله تعالیٰ has ruled that the love for being praised and the position of respect is permissible under three conditions. One, when the object is not to proclaim oneself as superior to others and to degrade them

to an insignificant position, but for the benefit in the Hereafter, so that others may be influenced to follow his example and try to emulate him. Second, when the object is not to earn false praise against a trait one does not possess, and desire that people should eulogize him for that. Third, when one does not have to indulge in a sin or negligence in the matter of faith in order to achieve it.

Supplication for the absolution of disbelievers is not allowed

وَاغْفِرْ لِأَبِيٓ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّآلِّينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

And forgive my father. Indeed he was among those who went astray. (26:86)

This prayer of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام seems to be against the following verse:

مَاكَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوٓا اَنْ يَّسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَلَوْ كَانُوٓا اُولِيْ قُرْبٰى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَاتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ اَنَّهُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ .

"It is not for the Prophet and the believers to seek forgiveness for the Mushriks, even if they are kinsmen, after it became clear to them that they are the people of hell. (9:113)

This verse clearly lays down the rule that it is not allowed for a Muslim to pray for the forgiveness of the one about whom it is certainly known that he died in the state of *kufr*.

Now the question arises here as to why did Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام supplicate for the forgiveness of his father, who was a disbeliever? Allah Ta'ālā himself has given answer to this question in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِاَبِيْهِ اِلَّا عَنْ مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَّعَدَهَآ اِيَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهٗٓ اَنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ لِّلّٰهِ تَبَرَّاَ مِنْهُ ۭ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لَاَوَّاهٌ حَلِيْمٌ.

And the prayer of Ibrāhīm for the forgiveness of his father was not but due to a promise he had made to him. Later when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he withdrew himself from him. Surely, Ibrāhīm is oft-sighing (before Allah), forbearing. (9:114)

The gist of the answer is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had supplicated for the pardon of his father within his lifetime with the intent and desire

that Allah Ta'ālā would give him Divine help to turn to faith, after which the forgiveness was sure. Alternatively, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was of the opinion that his father had accepted the faith, but had not made it public. But once he learnt that his father had died as an infidel, he pronounced his complete disgust against his attitude and disowned it.

Note

The point whether Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had become aware of the infidelity of his father within his lifetime or came to know about it after his death, or he would know this on the Dooms Day, is fully discussed in Sūrah Taubah.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَّلَا بَنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ اَتَى اللّٰهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

The Day when neither wealth will be of any use (to any one) nor sons, [88] except to one who will come to Allah with a sound heart, [26:89]

This verse has declared that wealth and children will not be of any help to a person on the Day of Judgment. This declaration is subjected to exception in the words, "except to one who will come to Allah with sound heart". (coming with sound heart means to come to Him with true faith). Now, this exception has been interpreted in two different ways. According to one interpretation adopted by some commentators this exception is not meant to exclude the believers from the rule. It is an exception of a special type which is known in Arabic grammar as "*munqaṭi'*" (This type of exception does not exclude anything from the aforementioned statement. It simply says that the thing negated in the first sentence is found in someone else.) A simple example for this expression is that a person is asked about Zaid whether he has some wealth and children, and he replies, "No, his wealth and children are nothing but his sound heart." The same expression is used in this verse. The gist of the verse, according to this interpretation would be that wealth and children will not be helpful to anyone, neither to a believer nor to a disbeliever; what will be helpful, instead of wealth and children, is one's sound heart, i.e. the true faith and righteous deeds.

The second interpretation, adopted by the majority, is that it is a normal exception which means that wealth and children may be helpful

to the one who will come to Allah with sound heart, i.e. with faith and righteous deeds, but these things will not be of any use to a disbeliever.

Another point worth noting in this verse is that while referring to 'children' the Holy Qur'ān has used the word بَنُوْن (Banūn) which is literally restricted to the male children. Probably the reason is that it is the male children from whom an effective help is expected in adverse situations. The expectation of help from female children in some calamities is very rare even in this world. Therefore, the male children are specifically mentioned in the context of the Hereafter to indicate that even those who were expected to help in the world will not be of any use there.

It may also be noted that "sound heart" literally means a healthy heart. But according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ' here it means that heart of a believer that testifies the Oneness of Allah and is pure from *shirk*. The same interpretation is reported from Mujāhid, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab رحمهم الله تعالىٰ with different expressions. Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab رحمهم الله تعالىٰ says that the sound heart is only that of a believer because the heart of a disbeliever is sick. The Holy Qur'ān says, فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ (In their heart there is a malady (2:10).

Wealth, children and the family relationship can also be beneficial in the Hereafter to a believer

In accordance with the commonly adopted explanation of the verse it has now become clear that the wealth of a person could be of help to him on the Dooms Day, provided he is a Muslim. It can be elaborated by saying that the one who has spent his wealth in this world in the way of Allah and in the cause of righteous deeds or has spent in an ongoing charity (Ṣadaqah Jariyah), will get its benefit in the Hereafter if he dies with the faith of Islam and is listed as a believer on the Day of Judgment. On the other hand if he was not a Muslim or God-forbid became an apostate before his death, then all the good deeds he had done in this world will be of no benefit to him. The same rule will apply in the case of children, that is, if a person is Muslim, he can benefit from them in the Hereafter in that his children supplicate for his forgiveness after his death. Also, if he had tried to train the children to be pious, whatever good they will do, its benefit will also be passed on to him as long as they do righteous deeds. It is also possible that his pious children obtain his pardon in the Hereafter by intercession. In a few Āḥādīth it is reported

about such an intercession and its acceptance, especially the intercession of the young children yet to attain puberty. Likewise, the children will also benefit from their parents on the condition of faith in that if they were Muslims but their righteous deeds could not attain the level of their parents, then Allah Ta'ālā by taking into account their parents good deeds would place them also at the high position of their parents. The Holy Qur'ān has elucidated it in these words وَأَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (52:21) that is 'We will join together with Our righteous servants their progeny'. The above quoted famous explanation of this verse has made it clear that wherever it is mentioned in the Qur'ān or hadith that the family connection will be of no avail in the Hereafter, the reference is to the non-believers. This principle is applicable to the extent that even if the wife and children of the messenger are not believers, they too would not benefit from his prophethood in the Hereafter, as is the case of the son of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام the wife of Lūṭ عليه السلام and the father of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام . The Qur'ānic verses فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ "Thereafter, when the Ṣūr (the trumpet) is blown, there are no ties of kinship between them" (23:101) and يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ (upon the day when a man shall flee from his brother, his mother, his father - 80:34) and لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَن وَلَدِهِ "nor will a son be standing for his father in any way" (31:33) all reflect this very theme. (وَاللهُ اعْلَمُ)

Verses 105 - 122

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ
﴿١٠٨﴾ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لَكَ وَاتَّبَعَكَ
الْأَرْذَلُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ قَالَ وَمَا عِلْمِي بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ إِنْ
حِسَابُهُمْ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّي لَوْ تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
﴿١١٤﴾ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَا نُوحُ لَتَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي كَذَّبُونِ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَافْتَحْ

بَيْنِى وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَّ نَجِّنِى وَمَنْ مَّعِىَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿۱۱۸﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ فِى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ ﴿۱۱۹﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدُ الْبٰقِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۱﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿۱۲۲﴾

And the people of Nūḥ belied the messengers [105] when their brother Nūḥ said to them, "Do you not fear Allah? [106] I am an honest messenger for you. [107] So, fear Allah and obey me. [108] And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds; [109] so, fear Allah and obey me." [110] They said, "Shall we believe in you while you are followed by the lowest people?" [111] He said, "I do not know about what they do; [112] their account is with none but with my Lord, if you have sense. [113] And I am not to drive the believers away; [114] I am not but a plain warner." [115] They said, "Should you not stop, O Nūḥ, you will surely be among those stoned." [116] He said, "My Lord, my people have belied me. [117] So judge between me and them with an open verdict and save me and all the believers who are with me." [118] So We saved him and those with him in the Ark that was fully occupied. [119] Then We drowned, after that, all the remaining. [120] Surely in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe. [121] And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [122]

Commentary

وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ

And I do not claim from you any reward for it. - 26:109

It is learnt from this verse that charging and acceptance of wages against religious teachings and preaching is not right. Therefore, the righteous elders have ruled it as forbidden, but the later generations have allowed it under compelling circumstances. Its full details have been given under the explanation of the verse لَاتَشْتَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِىْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا "And do not take a paltry price for My signs" - 2:41.

Special note

Here the verse فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ (So, fear Allah and obey me - 110) is repeated twice to make clear that for the obedience of the Messenger and fear of Allah it was enough that the prophet has any one of the two qualities: One, his honesty and integrity, and the second, his teaching and preaching without a fee. But when the Messenger who is personified of all these traits, his obedience and the fear of his God becomes all the more necessary.

Nobility of a person depends on deeds and moral qualities and not on family or status

قَالُوْٓا اَنُؤْمِنُ لَكَ وَاتَّبَعَكَ الْاَرْذَلُوْنَ. قَالَ وَمَا عِلْمِيْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ .

> They said, "Shall we believe in you while you are followed by the lowest people?" [111] He said, "I do not know about what they do. (26:111-112)

It is related in this verse that the disbelievers rejected the invitation of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام to accept the faith on the plea that his followers were worthless poor people. So, how could they, the elite and noble, mix up with them? On this Nūḥ عليه السلام replied that he did not know about their acts, thereby hinting that their understanding of nobility on the basis of family background, wealth, or status was wrong, and that the nobility or meanness and honour or disgrace is dependent on one's deeds and morals. Hence, it was their ignorance to put the label of sordidness on his followers, because they did not know about their deeds and disposition. Unless one knows fully well about the morals and deeds of others, it is not right to pass any judgment about them. (Qurṭubī).

Verses 123 - 140

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ ۨالْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ هُوْدٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٢٥﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اَتَبْنُوْنَ بِكُلِّ رِيْعٍ اٰيَةً تَعْبَثُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَتَّخِذُوْنَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُوْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَاِذَا بَطَشْتُمْ بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ

وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿۱۳۱﴾ وَ اتَّقُوا الَّذِیْٓ اَمَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۲﴾ اَمَدَّكُمْ بِاَنْعَامٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۳﴾ وَجَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿۱۳۴﴾ اِنِّیْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿۱۳۵﴾ قَالُوْا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَآ اَوَعَظْتَ اَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْوٰعِظِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۶﴾ اِنْ هٰذَا اِلَّا خُلُقُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۷﴾ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۸﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۹﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿۱۴۰﴾

The (people of) 'Ād belied the messengers [123] **when their brother Hūd said to them, "Do you not fear Allah?** [124] **I am an honest messenger for you,** [125] **so fear Allah and obey me.** [126] **And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds.** [127] **Do you erect on every height a sign, having no sound purpose,** [128] **and take the objects of architecture as if you are going to live for ever,** [129] **and when you seize (someone) you seize as tyrants?** [130] **So fear Allah and obey me.** [131] **And fear the One who has supported you with what you know.** [132] **He has supported you with cattle and sons,** [133] **and with gardens and springs.** [134] **In fact I fear for you the punishment of a great day."** [135]

They said, "It is all equal for us, whether you give us advice or you are not among those who give advice. [135] **This is nothing but the practice of the ancient,** [137] **and we are not going to be punished."** [138] **Thus they belied him, so We destroyed them. Surely, in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe.** [139] **And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [140]

Commentary

Explanation of some difficult words

اَتَبْنُوْنَ بِكُلِّ رِيْعٍ اٰيَةً تَعْبَثُوْنَ. وَتَتَّخِذُوْنَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُوْنَ .

Do you erect on every height a sign having no sound purpose, [128] and take the objects of architecture as if you are going to live for ever, (26:128-129)

Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله تعالى has related from Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى that the passage between two hills is called *Rī'* (ريع). But Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and majority have taken the meaning of *Rī'* as a high place, and its derivative is *rī'-un-na bāt'* (ريع النبات), which means growing and climbing vegetation. Literal meaning of 'Āyah (آية) is symbol or sign, but here it means a high palace. تَعْبَثُوْنَ is derived from *'abath* (عَبَث), which is something of no value and benefit neither in reality nor by implication. So, the meaning of the verse is that they used to make very high palaces of no benefit and which they did not need. It was just to fulfill their ego and pride. *maṣāni'* (مَصَانِع) is the plural of Maṣna' (مَصْنَع). Sayyidnā Qatādah has taken *maṣāni'* (مَصَانِع) for the water tank, whereas Ḥaḍrat Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى take it to mean strong palace.

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُوْنَ (as if you are going to live for ever) Imām al-Bukhārī رحمه الله تعالى has commented in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī that the word *la'alla* (لَعَلَّ) in the verse is used as a word of simile, and that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has translated it as كَاَنَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُوْنَ that is 'as if you are..'. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

Construction of buildings without any need is contemptible

This verse indicates that the construction of houses and buildings without need is a condemnable act. The *ḥadīth* quoted by Imām Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Anas ﷺ conveys exactly the same message: النفقة كلها فى سبيل الله إلا البناء فلا خير فيه (All spendings are in Allah's way, except construction, which has no merit). It means that the building which is constructed in excess of requirement has no benefit or virtue. Another narration of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ also confirms this: ان كل بناء وبال على صاحبه إلاّ مالا، إلاّ مالا، يعنى إلاّ مالا بدّ منه - 'Every building is a tribulation for the builder, except that which is necessary, because it is not a nuisance'. It is commented in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī that without genuine requirement construction of tall buildings is contemptible and condemned under the Sharī'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Verses 141 - 159

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ صٰلِحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ اِنِّىْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٤٤﴾

وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِىَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿١٤٥﴾ اَتُتْرَكُوْنَ فِىْ مَا هٰهُنَآ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فِىْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾
وَّزُرُوْعٍ وَّنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَتَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا
فٰرِهِيْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَلَا تُطِيْعُوْٓا اَمْرَ
الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُفْسِدُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُوْنَ
﴿١٥٢﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ مَآ اَنْتَ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ
مِّثْلُنَا ۖ فَاْتِ بِاٰيَةٍ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ قَالَ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةٌ لَّهَا
شِرْبٌ وَّلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ
فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَاَصْبَحُوْا نٰدِمِيْنَ
﴿١٥٧﴾ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۗ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٥٩﴾

The (people of) Thamūd belied the messengers [141] **when their brother Ṣāliḥ said to them, "Do you not fear Allah?** [142] **I am an honest messenger for you.** [143] **So, fear Allah and obey me.** [144] **And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds.** [145] **Will you be left secure in whatever is here,** [146] **in gardens and springs,** [147] **and in farms and date-palms, the spathes of which are interwoven?** [148] **And you hew out houses from the hills with pride.** [149] **So fear Allah and obey me,** [150] **and do not obey the order of the transgressors** [151] **make mischief on the land and who do not set things right".** [152]

They said, "You are merely one of those bewitched. [153] **You are nothing but a human like us. So, bring a sign if you are one of the truthful."** [154] **He said, "This is a she-camel - She has a share of water, and you have a share of water on a specified day.** [155] **So do not touch her with evil (intent), lest you should be seized by a painful punishment."** [156] **But they killed her, then they**

became remorseful and the punishment seized them. Surely in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe. [158] **And surely, your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [159]

Commentary

وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فٰرِهِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

And you hew out houses from the hills with pride. [149]

According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, the word فٰرِهِينَ (Fārihīn) means arrogant and conceited people. But Abū Ṣāliḥ and Imām Raghib have taken this word to mean experts. Therefore, the meaning of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā has favoured you by teaching such skills that you could make houses by cutting hills. The essence of all this is that you should remember the bounties of Allah Ta'ālā and should not make mischief and trouble on earth.

Useful vocations are Divine Graces provided they are not employed in bad things

This verse indicates that nice vocations are Allah's Graces, and to draw benefit from them is lawful. But if they are used for some sinful purpose or in an unlawful act, or if someone gets involved in them with unnecessary concentration, then it is not lawful to adopt them. An example of unnecessary construction of tall buildings and its contempt has just been mentioned in the previous verses.

Verses 160 - 175

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلَا
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ
﴿١٦٣﴾ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَتَذَرُونَ مَا
خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عٰدُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ قَالُوا
لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يٰلُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي

لَعَمَلِكُم مِّنَ الْقَالِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَنَجَّيْنَٰهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَرًا فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٧٥﴾

The people of Lūṭ belied the messengers [160] **when their brother Lūṭ said to them, "Do you not fear Allah?** [161] **I am an honest messenger for you.** [162] **So fear Allah and obey me.** [163] **And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds.** [164] **Do you go to the males(for having sex) out of the whole universe,** [165] **and leave what your Lord has created for you, that is, your wives? in fact, you are a people who cross (all) limits."** [166]

They said, "If you do not stop O Lūṭ, you shall be included among the outcast." [167] **He said "Certainly, I am hateful to your act.** [168] **O my Lord, save me and my family from what they do."** [169] **So We saved him and his family, all of them** [170] **except an old woman among those who remained behind.** [171] **Then We destroyed the others,** [172] **and subjected them to a terrible rain. So evil was the rain of those who were warned.** [173] **Surely, in this there is a sign, but most of them are not to believe.** [174] **And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [175]

Commentary

Unnatural act is unlawful even with one's own wife

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُم مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُم

And leave what your Lord has created for you, that is, your wives? - 26:166

In the phrase مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ the word مِنْ (*min*) *Min* could be descriptive (which is translated above as 'that is') if taken in the technical sense, which would mean that in order to satisfy your lust you go after the homosexual men instead of your wives, whom Allah has given you to

meet your natural urge. This is indeed a proof of malignity. The other possibility is that the letter '*Min*' is used to mean 'from' or 'out of'; then the meaning of the verse would be that it is a special part in the body of your wives which is created for the satisfaction of your natural urge. But you indulge in unnatural act with them, which is totally unlawful. Thus according to this second interpretation, it has also been made clear that it is not permitted to have unnatural intercourse with one's wife. In a *ḥadīth* Holy Prophet ﷺ has cast curse on such a person. نعوذ بالله منه (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī).

اِلَّا عَجُوْزًا فِى الْغٰبِرِيْنَ

Except an old woman among those who remained behind. - 26:171

The word 'old woman' is used for the wife of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, who was an infidel and was agreeable to the unnatural act of the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام. If the wife of Lūṭ عليه السلام was an old woman then the use of this word for her is quite clear, but if she was not old, then perhaps she was called 'old woman' for the reason that the prophet's wife is regarded like the mother of the Ummah, and to call a woman having many children as old is not unlikely.

وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ

and subjected them to a terrible rain. So evil was the rain of those who were warned. - 26:173

This verse has confirmed that if a man commits sodomy, he may be punished with throwing a wall on him or by throwing him down from a high place, as suggested by Ḥanafī scholars, because the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام were destroyed in a similar manner. Their township was lifted and thrown on the ground. (Shāmī Kitāb Al-Ḥudūd)

Verses 176 - 191

كَذَّبَ اَصْحٰبُ لْئَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ اِنِّىْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ

﴿١٧٩﴾ وَمَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِىَ اِلاَّ عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿١٨٠﴾ اَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلاَ تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِيْنَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَزِنُوْا
بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَلاَ تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلاَ
تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِىْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِيْنَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ اِلاَّ
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَاِنْ نَّظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ فَاَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا
مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّىْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ ۗ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ
عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٨٩﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٩١﴾

The people of Aykah belied the messengers [176] **when Shu‘aib said to them, "Do you not fear Allah?** [177] **I am an honest messenger for you.** [178] **So fear Allah and obey me.** [179] **And I do not claim from you any reward for it; my reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds.** [180] **Give full measure and do not be among those who bring loss to others.** [181] **And weigh with an even balance.** [182] **And do not make people short of their things and do not spread disorder in the land as mischief makers.** [183] **And be fearful of the One who created you and the former generations."** [184]

They said, "You are but one of the bewitched men. [185] **And you are no more than a human like us, and in fact we consider you to be one of the liars.** [186] **So cause a piece from the sky to fall down upon us, if you are one of the truthful."** [187] **He said, "My Lord knows best what you do."** [188] **Thus they belied him, so they were seized by the torment of the Day of Canopy. Indeed it was the punishment of a terrible day.** [189] **Surely in this there is a sign, but most of them are not to believe.** [190] **And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.** [191]

Commentary

وَزِنُوْا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ

And weigh with an even balance. - 26:182

Some scholars have held the word Quisṭās as a Roman word, which means justice, while others have taken it as an Arabic word, derived from *Qisṭ*, which is also used for justice. It means to make use of the scale and other measuring tools in a straight and correct manner, where there is no possibility of weighing less.

وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ

And do not make people short of their things - 26:183

What it means is that it is unlawful to reduce any quantity or amount from that which has been contracted with anyone, whether it is a measurable thing or otherwise. Therefore, if a servant or a laborer does not work his full time at his workplace, he too is included in this warning. Imām Malik رحمه الله تعالى has reported a narration in his Muwaṭṭa’ that Sayyidnā ‘Umar ﷺ noticed that someone did not join in the ‘Aṣr prayer. So, he enquired about the reason for that, to which he offered some excuse. Then Sayyidnā ‘Umar ﷺ said, طَفَّفْتَ ‘You have reduced in measuring’. As prayer is not something to be measured, hence after quoting this ḥadīth Imām Malik رحمه الله تعالى has said that this command is not restricted to measurable things. Rather, performing any obligation less than due is included in prohibition highlighted in this verse and in Sūrah "At-taṭfīf 84".

فَاَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ

so they were seized by the torment of the Day of Canopy. - 26:189

عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ (the Torment of the Canopy), mentioned in this verse refers to an incident, which is this: Allah Ta‘ālā sent down such an extreme heat on a people that they could not find comfort either inside the houses or outside. Then He sent down a mass of dark cloud over a nearby forest, under which there was a cool breeze. As the entire people were distressed due to excessive heat, they ran to take shelter under the cloud. When all of them assembled under the cover of the cloud, it rained fire

instead of water. Thus the whole nation was burnt to ashes. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

Verses 192 - 227

وَاِنَّهٗ لَتَنْزِيْلُ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوْحُ الْاَمِيْنُ ﴿١٩٣﴾
عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٩٥﴾
وَ اِنَّهٗ لَفِيْ زُبُرِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ اٰيَةً اَنْ يَّعْلَمَهٗ عُلَمٰٓؤُا
بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنٰهُ عَلٰى بَعْضِ الْاَعْجَمِيْنَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ فَقَرَاَهٗ
عَلَيْهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ كَذٰلِكَ سَلَكْنٰهُ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ
الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٢٠١﴾
فَيَاْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ فَيَقُوْلُوْا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنْظَرُوْنَ
﴿٢٠٣﴾ اَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتَ اِنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُمْ سِنِيْنَ
﴿٢٠٥﴾ ثُمَّ جَآءَهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا
كَانُوْا يُمَتَّعُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٧﴾ وَمَآ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا لَهَا مُنْذِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٨﴾
ذِكْرٰى ۛ وَمَا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٠٩﴾ وَمَا تَنَزَّلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ ﴿٢١٠﴾
وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿٢١١﴾ اِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعْزُوْلُوْنَ
﴿٢١٢﴾ فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٢١٣﴾
وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ ﴿٢١٤﴾ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢١٥﴾ فَاِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ اِنِّيْ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
﴿٢١٦﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيْزِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٢١٧﴾ الَّذِيْ يَرٰىكَ حِيْنَ تَقُوْمُ
﴿٢١٨﴾ وَ تَقَلُّبَكَ فِي السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٢١٩﴾ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ
﴿٢٢٠﴾ هَلْ اُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلٰى مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ ﴿٢٢١﴾ تَنَزَّلُ عَلٰى كُلِّ
اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ يُّلْقُوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَاَكْثَرُهُمْ كٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ وَالشُّعَرَآءُ

يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّهُمْ فِىْ كُلِّ وَادٍ يَّهِيْمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢٥﴾
وَاَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّانْتَصَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوْا ؕ
وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْۤا اَىَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

And this (Qur'ān) is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. [192] **It is brought by the Trusted Spirit down** [193] **to your heart, so that you become one of the warners** [194] **in plain Arabic language.** [195] **And of course, it is (mentioned) in the scriptures of the former people.** [196]

Is it not a proof for them that the knowledgeable of the children of Isrā'īl recognize him (the prophet)? [197] **And (even) if We had revealed it to a non-Arab,** [198] **and he would have recited it to them, they were not to believe in it.** [199] **Thus We have made it enter into the hearts of the sinners.** [200] **They will not believe in it until they will see the painful punishment** [201] **and it will come to them suddenly while they will not be anticipating (it),** [202] **and they will say, "Is it (possible) that we are given some respite?"** [203] **Are they asking then that Our punishment should come soon?** [204] **So tell me, If We give them enjoyment for years,** [205] **then comes to them what they are warned of,** [206] **what help can be provided to them by the things they were given to enjoy?** [207] **And We did not destroy any town unless it has had warners** [208] **to give advice, and We have never been unjust.** [209]

And this (Qur'ān) is not brought down by the satans. [210] **It neither fits them, nor are they able to (do this).** [211] **In fact they are kept far from hearing (it at the time of revelation).** [212] **So do not invoke any other god along with Allah, or you will be among those who are to be punished.** [213] **And warn the nearest people of your clan,** [214] **and be kind with humbleness to the believers who followed you.** [215] **So if they disobey you, then say, "I disown what you do,"** [216] **and place your trust in the Mighty, the Merciful,** [217] **Who sees you when you stand**

[218] (in prayer) and (sees) your movement among those who prostrate. [219] **Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.** [220]

Shall I tell you on whom the satans descend? [221] **They descend on every sinful liar. They give ear to hear (secretly) and most of them tell lies. As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. Did you not see that they wander in every valley and that they say what they do not do, except those who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah very much and defend themselves after they are wronged. And the wrongdoers will soon know to which place they are going to return.** [227]

Commentary

Qur'ān is the name of the collection of its words and meanings

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوْحُ الْاَمِيْنُ ﴿۱۹۳﴾ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۹۴﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۱۹۵﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَفِيْ زُبُرِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿۱۹۶﴾

It is brought by the Trusted Spirit down [193] to your heart, so that you become one of the warners [194] in plain Arabic language. [195] And of course, it is (mentioned) in the scriptures of the former people. [196]

The words بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِيْنٍ (in plain Arabic language - 195) in these verses makes it clear that Qur'ān is only that which is in Arabic language. Any translation of a passage or the whole of Qur'ān in any language cannot be called Qur'ān. But the next sentence اِنَّهٗ لَفِيْ زُبُرِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ (And of course, it is [mentioned] in the scriptures of the former people - 196) does not seem to be in consonance with it, because the pronoun 'it' is apparently refers to the Qur'ān and means that the Qur'ān was also in the earlier scriptures, i.e. in Torah, Injīl and Zabūr. It is also well known that the earlier books, namely Torah, Injīl and Zabūr, were not in the Arabic language. Hence the inclusion of the meanings of Qur'ān in them is referred in this verse as 'Qur'ān'. Answer to this apparent contradiction is that according to majority of the Ummah, sometimes even the subject matter of the Qur'ān is called Qur'ān in a general sense, because the real purpose of a book is the subjects it deals with. The statement that earlier books also contained Qur'ān is in this sense only that they included some Qur'ānic subjects. This statement is also endorsed by many narrations of *ḥadīth*.

Sayyidnā Maquil ibn Yasar ﷺ has reported a Ḥadīth in Mustadrak of Ḥākim that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that Sūrah Al-Baqarah was given to him from *'adh-dhikr al-'awwal'*, and Sūrah Ṭāhā, Ṭawāsin طواسين (all Sūrahs starting from Ṭasin طس) and Ḥawāmīm حواميم (all Sūrahs beginning with Ḥāmīm) were given from the tablets of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, while Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was given to him from under the *'Arsh* عرش (the great Throne). Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim, Baihaqī etc. have reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that Sūrah Al-Mulk is present in Torah as well. (Al-Ḥadīth). The Sūrah سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى has itself said, إِنَّ هٰذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ (87:18,19) that is these subjects have also appeared in the books of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليهم السلام.

The gist of all these verses and narrations is that many a subjects of the Qur'ān were also covered in the earlier books as well. But it does not ıean that those parts of the earlier books in which the Qur'ānic subjects were covered are given the name of Qur'ān. No one in the Ummah is of the opinion that those parts of the earlier books, be called Qur'ān. Instead the majority of Ummah believes that Qur'ān is the name not only of its wordings but also of its meanings. If someone picks up some of the Quranic words from different places and put them together to make a passage like الحمد لله العزيز الرّحيم الّذى له' ملک السّمٰوٰت وهو ربّ العٰلمين خالق كل شئ وهو المستعان, it will not be called Qur'ān, despite the fact that all these words are taken from the Qur'ān. Likewise, only the meanings of Qur'ān, irrespective of the language they are rendered in, cannot be regarded as Qur'ān.

Reciting translation of Qur'ān in prayers is not allowed by consensus of Ummah

The whole Ummah is unanimous on the rule that reciting the translation of the Qur'ān in any other language like Urdu, Persian, English etc. is not sufficient for discharging the obligation of recitation in Ṣalāh, except in a case of extreme necessity. The jurists who are reported to have relaxed this rule have, later on, changed their view.

Urdu translation of Qur'ān is not allowed to be called Urdu Qur'ān

If only the translation of the Qur'ān is written in any language without the Arabic text, it cannot be called the Qur'ān. Some people call

the Urdu translation of the Qur'ān as Urdu Qur'ān, or the English translation of the Qur'ān as English Qur'ān. It is not right and amounts to disrespect of the Holy Book. Printing, calling or trading of something in the name of Qur'ān, without the Arabic text of the Qur'ān, is not permitted. This subject is dealt with in detail in my treatise (تحذير الاخوان عن تغيير رسم القرآن).

اَفَرَءَيْتَ اِنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُمْ سِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

So tell me, If We give them enjoyment for years, - 26:205.

There is a hint in this verse that those who are bestowed with long life in this world by Allah Ta'ālā, it is His grace on them. But those who show ingratitude for this grace and do not submit to Islam, to them this respite and grace will not be of any avail. Imām Zuhrī رحمه الله تعالىٰ has related that Sayyidnā 'Umar ibn 'Abdul Azīz رحمه الله تعالىٰ used to recite this verse every morning by holding his beard and addressing his Self:

نهارك يا مغرور سهو و غفلة وليلك نوم والرّدىٰ لك لازم

فلا انت فى الايقاظ يقظان حازم ولا انت فى النّوّام ناجٍ وسالم

وتسعٰى الى ما سوف تكره غبّه كذٰلك فى الدّنيا تعيش البهائم

'O the duped one! Your whole day is spent in negligence and the night in sleep, while death is inevitable for you. Neither you are awake among the alert and woken nor are you the one who will get salvation from among the sleepers. You keep endeavoring for things which will soon bring you unpleasant results. Cattle and animals live like this in the world'.

وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ ﴿٢١٤﴾

And warn the nearest people of your clan, -26:214.

'Ashirah عشيرة means clan and by limiting it with *'aqrabīn* (the nearest people) it is used for close relatives. It is worth noting here that the mission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a messenger is universal to the whole Ummah, then what is the wisdom in making it special for the members of the clan? But if we look at it rather closely, we will notice in it an easy and effective way for preaching, which would have far-reaching effect. One's own family members having the privilege of closeness are also entitled to

have precedence over others on initiating any act of virtue. By virtue of close mutual relations they know each other well and anyone with false claims would get exposed in no time. Conversely, the one having good reputation among the family members would be readily accepted and listened to. Once the close relatives throw their weight to support a good cause, it brings in unity and mutual help between them. This way they develop a group of the family members on the basis of trust and sincerity and it becomes very easy to spend the daily life in an atmosphere of peace to follow the religious code. Then this homogeneous and sincere group works like a small power in preaching and spreading the precepts and code of religion to others. In another verse of the Holy Qur'ān it is said قُوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا (66:6) that is 'Save yourself and your family members from the fire of Jahannam'. Responsibility of saving one's dependent from the fire of Jahannam is placed on every member of the clan. This is an easy and simple way of reforming the conduct and morals. It is an every day experience that in order to follow good conduct and morals and then to stick to them is only possible when the environment is favourable for that. If only one person in the entire household wishes to perform his prayers regularly, even that devotee will find it difficult to carry it out. In the present environment it has become difficult to abstain from the unlawful things not because it is not possible to keep away from them, but the reason is that when the whole fraternity is involved in a sin, it becomes very difficult for just one person to keep himself aloof. When this verse was revealed to Holy Prophet ﷺ , he called out all the members of the family and conveyed to them the message of truth. Although they did not accept the truth at that time but gradually the family members started converting to Islam. When the uncle of Holy Prophet ﷺ Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ, converted to Islam it provided great strength to the mission.

وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. - 26:224.

شِعر (Shi'r) which is the origin of Shu'arā' and is translated as poetry; is an Arabic word which lexically means any statement based on imagination and ideas not confirmed by serious proofs. It is not necessary for being a 'Shi'r' in original Arabic to have a particular rhythm or

qāfiyah or *radīf.*

Since the technical *shi'r* (poetry) which is always based on particular rhythms is generally composed of imaginary thoughts, the technical definition of *shi'r* (poetry) is "a composition of words having a particular rhythm and a similar sound at the end of each line (Qāfiyah)". The pagans of Makkah used to call the Holy Prophet ﷺ a *shā'ir* (a poet) and the Holy Qur'ān, a *shi'r* (poetry). Some commentators of the Holy Qur'ān are of the view that the pagans of Makkah used to call the Qur'ān a *shi'r* in its technical sense. But others are of the opinion that it was not so, because the infidels of Makkah were fully conversant with the code and principles of poetry, and it is obvious that Qur'ān is not a book of poetry. Even a non-Arab would not accept that, not to say anything of the eloquent Arabs. On the contrary, the Arabs used to call him a poet in the literal sense of the word, that is they regarded his thoughts as imaginary. Their objective was to call him a liar, because the word *Shā'ir* is also used in the sense of lie, and *Shi'r* for a liar.

وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿۲۲٤﴾

As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. - 26:224

The word شاعر (Shā'ir) is used in this verse in its technical and commonly known meaning, that is the rhythmic composer. This interpretation is endorsed by a narration in Fataḥul Bārī that when this verse was revealed, the respected companions, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah, Ḥassān ibn Thābit and Ka'b ibn Mālik رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین, who were well known poets, went crying to Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted that this verse was revealed by Allah Ta'ālā and they too were poets. Then Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'You go through the last part of the verse'. What he conveyed was that their poetry was not frivolous having bad intent, hence they were included in that exception which is mentioned in the last part of the verse. The commentators have therefore, elaborated that in the beginning of the verse the disbeliever poets are purported, because depraved people, defiant Satan and disobedient Jinn followed and narrated their poetry. (Fataḥul Bārī)

The place of poetry in Islamic Sharī'ah (jurisprudence)

In the beginning of these verses the poetry is disapproved strongly and appears an object of God's wrath. But towards the end of Sūrah the exception allowed proves that poetry is not condemned completely. Only that poetry is condemned and abominable which encourages Allah's disobedience or puts hindrance in His remembrance, or disgraces and condemns someone falsely, or be obscene or leads to obscenity. But that poetry which is free from these sins and unbecoming things is exonerated by Allah Ta'ālā through this verse إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّلِحٰتِ (227). On the other hand the poetry which deals with the subjects of wisdom based on sermons and teachings is part of the virtues carrying reward in the Hereafter as reported by Sayyidnā 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b ﷺ إنّ من الشعر حكمة that is 'There is a poetry which contains wisdom'. (Bukhārī) Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar has said that here wisdom stands for rightful things based on truth. Ibn Baṭṭāl has explained that the poetry dealing with Oneness of Allah, His remembrance and love for Islam is desirable and praiseworthy, and in the hadith under reference that type of poetry is in view. However, the poetry dealing with falsehood and obscenity is contemptible. This explanation is also confirmed by the following narrations:

(1) 'Amr ibn Sharīd has reported through his father that Holy Prophet ﷺ had listened 100 couplets of 'Umayyah ibn aṣ-ṣalt from him.

(2) Muṭarrif has reported that he traveled with Sayyidnā 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣain ﷺ from Kūfa to Baṣrah and he used to recite couplets on every stage of the journey.

(3) Ṭabarī رحمه الله تعالى has reported about the distinguished companions and *tābi'īn* that they used to compose, listen and recite poetry.

(4) Imām Bukhārī رحمه الله تعالى has reported that Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها used to compose poetry.

(5) Abū Ya'lā has reported from Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, "Poetry is a composition". If its subject matter is good and useful, it is good, and if its subject is bad or sinful, it is bad. (Fataḥul Bārī)

Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī has remarked that from among the ten jurists of

Madīnah, who are well known for their learning and graciousness, 'Ubaidullāh ibn 'Utbah ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ was an eloquently articulate poet, and the poetry of Qāḍī Zubair ibn Bakkār was compiled in a book. Qurṭubī has reproduced an observation of Abū 'Amr that no intelligent and knowledgeable person would take the poetry comprising of nice subjects as bad. It is also worth noting that among the noble companions who were the religious leaders, there is none who had either not composed the poetry himself or had not recited or listened to the composition of others with fondness.

Where poetry is condemned in certain narrations, it is with the purpose that one should not get engrossed so much in it that he neglects his worships and the Qur'ān. Imām Bukhārī has elaborated this subject in a separate chapter in which he has quoted from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ :

لَاَنْ يَمْتَلِئَ جَوْفُ رَجُلٍ قَيْحًا يَرِيْهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ اَنْ يَمْتَلِئَ شِعرًا

'It is better to fill up one's belly with pus than to fill it up with poetry'.

Imām Bukhārī has explained that according to his understanding this statement portrays the situation when the poetry becomes dominant over remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā, or in one's involvement with the Qur'ān or with acquiring knowledge. But if the poetry is kept under check, it is not bad. Similarly, there is consensus of Ummah that the poetry which is obscene or contains defaming subjects is unlawful and is not permitted. This ruling is not exclusive to poetry only, but applies to any writing – prose or poetry. (Qurṭubī)

Sayyidnā 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ had dismissed his governor, 'Adiyy ibn Naḍlah from his position because he used to compose obscene poetry. Sayyidnā 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz رحمه الله تعالى had directed to exile 'Amr ibn Rabī'ah and 'Abul Aḥwaṣ on the same charge, but when 'Amr ibn Rabī'ah repented on his deeds, his repentance was accepted. (Qurṭubī).

Every art or learning, which makes one oblivious of Allah and Hereafter, is contemptible

Ibn Abī Jamrah has ruled that excessive involvement in poetry and all such learning or art which makes one oblivious of the remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā and causes doubts in the mind about beliefs of Islam or helps

in promoting spiritual ills, fall under the same ruling as is given for contemptible poetry.

The depravity of the followers is often an indicator of the depravity of the leader

وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾ؕ

As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. - 26:224

The poets are blamed in this verse that their followers are misled. Here the question arises that if it is the followers who are misled, how could the poets be blamed for the acts which their followers adopt? It is because the wrong deeds adopted by the followers are normally the signs of misdeeds of the one who is followed. But Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has clarified that this rule will apply when the one who is followed has a hand in the misdeeds of the followers. For instance if there is no check on telling lies and backbiting in the meetings of the leader, and because of that his followers, who sit in his company, also adopt this habit, then this sin committed by the followers will be regarded as a manifestation of the sin of the one who is followed. But if the misdeeds are different from the deeds of the leader, then he cannot be made responsible for the misdeeds of his followers. For example, if a person follows a scholar for his beliefs diligently and sincerely, but does not follow the scholar in his righteous deeds and morals, then the scholar cannot be blamed for the former's lack of righteousness and morality. (Allah is pure and knows best).

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā'

Ends here.

Sūrah An-Naml

(The Ant)

Sūrah An-Naml was revealed in Makkah and it has 93 Verses and 7 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

طٰسٓ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْقُرْاٰنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۱﴾ هُدًى وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۲﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿۳﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَايُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْاَخْسَرُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْاٰنَ مِنْ لَّدُنْ حَكِيْمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٦﴾

Ṭā, Sīn. These are the verses of the Qur'ān and an enlightening book, [1] to give guidance and good news to the believers [2] who establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh and who have faith in the Hereafter. [3] As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds adorned in their sight. So they are wandering astray. [4] Those are the the people who deserve the worst punishment and who are the worst losers in the Hereafter. [5] And surely you are being given the Qur'ān by a wise, knowledgeable Being. [6]

Commentary

زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (We have made their deeds adorned in their sight - 27:4)It means that those who do not believe in the Hereafter We have made their bad actions look adorned in their sight. Therefore they feel good about them and remain enthralled in depravity. Some commentators have interpreted that "their deeds" is used in this verse for good deeds. Hence meaning of the verse is that Allah had placed the good deeds before them with all their attractions. But those unjust people did not pay any attention to them, rather they remained engrossed in infidelity; hence lost their way in wilderness.

However, the first interpretation looks more appropriate and straightforward. In the first place, in the Qur'ān, the word (*Zīnah*) 'adornment' has been generally used for bad actions, for instance: زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوٰتِ، (It has been made attractive for people to love the desires - 3:14) زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا (Adorned is the present life for those who disbelieve - 2:212) زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. (6:137). Its use for good actions is very rare , such as: وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ (But Allah has endeared to you belief, decking it fair in your hearts - 49:7). Secondly, the word اعمالهم(their deeds) used in the verse is also pointing out that bad actions are meant here and not the righteous actions.

Verses 7 - 14

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسٰى لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّيْ اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا ؕ سَاٰتِيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ اٰتِيْكُمْ
بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهَا نُوْدِيَ أَنْۢ بُوْرِكَ
مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ؕ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾
يٰمُوْسٰٓى إِنَّهٗٓ أَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ؕ فَلَمَّا رَاٰهَا
تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَّلّٰى مُدْبِرًا وَّلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ؕ يٰمُوْسٰى لَا تَخَفْ ۫ إِنِّيْ
لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًاۢ بَعْدَ
سُوْٓءٍ فَإِنِّيْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِيْ جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ
بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوْٓءٍ ۫ فِيْ تِسْعِ اٰيٰتٍ إِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهٖ ؕ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْهُمْ اٰيٰتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوْا هٰذَا

سِحۡرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسۡتَيۡقَنَتۡهَآ اَنۡفُسُهُمۡ ظُلۡمًا وَّعُلُوًّا ؕ فَانۡظُرۡ كَيۡفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الۡمُفۡسِدِيۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾

(Remember) when Mūsā said to his family, "I have noticed a fire. I shall bring to you some news from it, or bring to you a live ember, so that you may warm yourselves." [7] So when he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is the one who is in the fire and the one who is around it. And pure is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [8] O Mūsā, the fact is that I AM Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [9] And cast your staff down." So when he saw it moving, as if it was a snake, he retreated, turning his back and did not look behind. "O Mūsā be not scared. I am such that the messengers are not scared before Me, [10] except him who did wrong, then after (having done) evil, replaced (it) with good, then I am Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [11] And put your hand into your bosom, and it will come out white, without any evil, as one of the nine signs (sent) to the Pharaoh and his people. Surely they have been a sinful people. [12]

So when Our signs came to them as an eye-opener, they said, "This is a clear magic." [13] And they denied them out of sheer injustice and arrogance, though their hearts believed them (to be true). See, then, how was the fate of the mischief-makers. [14]

Commentary

Adoption of natural means for one's need is not against trust in Allah

اِذۡ قَالَ مُوۡسٰى لِاَهۡلِهٖۤ اِنِّىۡۤ اٰنَسۡتُ نَارًا ؕ سَاٰتِيۡكُمۡ مِّنۡهَا بِخَبَرٍ اَوۡ اٰتِيۡكُمۡ بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمۡ تَصۡطَلُوۡنَ ﴿۷﴾

(Remember) when Mūsā said to his family, "I have noticed a fire. I shall bring to you some news or bring to you an inflamed ember, so that you may warm yourselves" (27:7).

Here Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام faced two necessities. One, to find out the way. which he had forgotten, and second, to warm up with the fire, because it was a cold night. For achieving this purpose he tried to go to

mount Ṭūr. But he did not make a claim of success in his endeavour, rather he uttered such words that conveyed his servitude and hope from Allah Ta'ālā. Thus, it is apparent that in order to meet one's requirements and needs in life it is not against the trust in Allah to strive and make endeavour. But the conviction should be in Allah Ta'ālā and not in one's own efforts. Perhaps, the wisdom in showing him the fire was that it had fulfilled his two needs – finding the way and to get warm with its heat. (Rūḥ)

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has said امْكُثُوا and تَصْطَلُوْنَ which are both in plural form, and are used where the addressees are more than one, although there was only his wife (Sayyidnā Shuaib's عليه السلام daughter) with him. Use of plural form for her only was to show respect to her. It was in the same manner as some times the noble people use plural form in addressing even a single person. It is reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ also in aḥādīth that he used to address his wives in plural form.

It is prudent not to refer one's wife by her name in general gatherings, rather an allusion for the purpose is better

قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِاَهْلِهٖ (Mūsā said to his family) The word "Ahl" is used in this verse for the wife of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام while this word means "family" and includes all the members of one's household alongwith his wife, although the wife of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was the only one present at the time of this incident, but by the use of this word in his discourse there is a hint that while referring to one's wife in a group of people it is better to use common words. For example, 'my family members are of the opinion'.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهَا نُوْدِیَ اَنْۢ بُوْرِكَ مَنْ فِی النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ؕ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۸﴾ یٰمُوْسٰۤی اِنَّهٗۤ اَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿۹﴾

So when he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is the one who is in the fire and the one who is around it And pure is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. O Mūsā, the fact is that I AM Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. (27:8 - 9)

The real nature of seeing the fire and hearing the voice from it

This incident of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has appeared in the Qur'ān at many places under different chapters. Two sentences in the above verses of Sūrah An-Naml call for special attention. One, بُوْرِكَ مَنْ فِی النَّارِ (Blessed is the one who is in the fire) and two, اِنَّهٗۤ اَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ.(The fact is that I AM

Allah, the Mighty, the Wise) In Sūrah Ṭa-Ḥā, the commentary on which appears in this volume earlier, this incident is mentioned in these words:

إِذْ رَا نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّيٓ اٰنَسْتُ نَاراً لَّعَلِّي اٰتِيْكُم مِّنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ اَوْ اَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى ﴿١٠﴾ فَلَمَّا اَتٰهَا نُوْدِيَ يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿١١﴾ إِنِّيٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٢﴾ وَاَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوْحٰى ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّنِيٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِيْ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِذِكْرِيْ ﴿١٤﴾

When he saw a fire and said to his family, wait. I have noticed a fire. Perhaps I bring you an ember from it, or find some guidance by the fire."

So when he came to it, he was called, "O Mūsā, it is Me, your Lord, remove your shoes, you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa. And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely, I AM ALLAH. There is no god but I, so worship Me and establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance. (20:10-14)

In these verses also two sentences need special attention: إِنِّيٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ (it is Me, your Lord) and إِنَّنِيٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ (I AM ALLAH). And in Sūrah Al-Qaṣāṣ the incident is related in these words:

نُوْدِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْاَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبٰرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ اَنْ يّٰمُوْسٰى إِنِّيٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

He was called by a voice coming from a side of the right valley in the blessed ground, from the tree, saying" O Mūsā, I AM Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (28:30)

In all the three Sūrahs although the incident is described under different titles, yet the subject matter is the same, which is that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام needed fire that night for quite a few reasons. Allah Ta'ālā evinced that to him on a tree of mount Ṭūr, and he heard these words from that fire or the tree:

إِنِّيٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ

It is Me your Lord. (20:12)

إِنَّهٗ اَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ

The fact is that I AM ALLAH, the Mighty, the Wise. (27:9)

إِنَّنِيٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ اَنَا

I AM ALLAH. There is no god but I. (20:14)

إِنِّىٓ أَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

I AM ALLAH, the Lord of the worlds. (28:30)

It is possible that this vocative might have been repeated again and again, sometime by one word and then by another. The condition of hearing this vocative as described by Abū Ḥayyān in Tafsīr Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ and by 'Ālūsī in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī is that it was heard in a manner as if it was emanating from all sides, and not from any particular direction. The hearing of this was also very peculiar in that it was not heard by the ears only but by all the parts of the body, which was nothing less than a miracle.

It was the sound of an invisible speaker which was being heard without a particular quality (*kayf*) and without determining the direction. But its source was the fire or the tree on which the fire was glowing. Under such situations normally people get led into fallacy and involve themselves in idol worshipping. Therefore, under each title, the Oneness of Allah has been reminded and emphasized alongside. In the verse under reference سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ (Pure is Allah) is added for this very warning. In Sūrah Ṭa-Ḥā the expression لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا (20:14) and in Sūrah Al-Qaṣāṣ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (28:30) is used for the emphasis of this point. The outcome of this discussion is that the fire was shown to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام because he was in need of fire and light at that time, otherwise there was no connection between the Word of Allah or with the entity of Allah with the fire or the tree of Ṭūr. Fire was nothing but a creature of Allah Ta'ālā like so many other creatures. This is why the commentators have different views in the interpretation of the verses under reference: اَنْۢ بُوْرِكَ مَنْ فِى النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا (27:8) that is Blessed is the one who is in the fire and the one who is around it. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Mujāhid and 'Ikrimah have expressed the view that the words مَنْ فِى النَّارِ (the one who is in the fire) stand for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام because the fire he had seen was not the real fire, but the auspicious spot he had reached was so luminous that it looked like fire from a distance. Therefore, Mūsā عليه السلام was inside that fire, and مَنْ حَوْلَهَا (the one who is around it) is purported for the angels, who were present there nearby. Other commentators have put forward a totally opposite explanation, that the words "who is in the fire" refer to the

angels, while the words "who is around it" stand for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. Tafsīr Bayān ul Qur'ān has adopted the latter explanation. It is sufficient to know this much for the understanding of the meaning of these verses.

A narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī and its explanation

Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Marduwaih etc. have also quoted another explanation put forward by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al- Baṣrī and Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنهم about the phrase مَنْ فِى النَّارِ (who is *in the fire*) that it is meant for Allah Ta'ālā Himself. It is but obvious that fire is created by Allah, and incarnation of the Creator into anything created by Him is impossible. Therefore, this narration cannot be taken to mean that Allah Ta'ālā had transfigured into the fire, as many idol-worshippers believe in transfiguration of God in their idols. This is absolutely against the concept of Tauḥīd (Oneness of Allah). All it means is manifestation, like the reflection in the mirror. The image is manifested in the mirror but it is not transfigured in it. What is seen in the mirror is outside it, having its own entity. It is also quite evident that this manifestation, which is also called refulgence, was not the refulgence of Allah Ta'ālā. It is for the simple reason that if Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had already witnessed the Divinity, he would not have requested at the mount of Ṭūr رَبِّ أَرِنِيْٓ أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ that is, 'O my Lord, show Your Self to me (7:143), so that I may look at you'. In that case the reply لَنْ تَرَانِىْ (You will never see me - 7:143) would also have been meaningless. It is now clear that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in his explanation had meant the manifestation of Allah Ta'ālā, that is refulgence, which appeared in the form of fire. As it was not the transmigration, it was also not the refulgence of His real Self. The phrase لَنْ تَرَانِىْ (You will never see me) has also clarified that in this world no one can witness the refulgence of His real Self. Then what do manifestation and refulgence really mean? The answer to this is that this refulgence was figurative, which is commonly known among the mystics. It is rather difficult to comprehend it fully, but in order to make it simple according to common understanding, I have tried to explain it in my book Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān, in Arabic language,in the explanation of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ. Those who are interested can see it there.

إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا ۢ بَعْدَ سُوْٓءٍ فَإِنِّىْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۱﴾

Except him who did wrong, then after (doing) evil replaced (it) with good, then I am Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. 27:11

The miracle of the staff of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was mentioned in the verse prior to this, where it was also stated that when the staff turned into serpent, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام himself started running out of fear. The other miracle of illuminative hand of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is related in the verse next to above referred verse. Then why this exception is mentioned in between two verses relating to miracles, and whether this exception is snapped from the subject (*munqaṭi'*) or is it adjoining (*muttaṣil*)? The commentators have different view points on this subject. Some have declared it as snapped from the subject. In that case the verse will read as that in the previous verse it was stated that messengers do not get frightened, then it was also mentioned, by the way, as to who are the ones who should get frightened. They are those who have committed any sin, but later repented and sought Allah's pardon and performed good deeds. Although Allah Ta'ālā would pardon their sins, but even then there would be possibility of traces of sins being left over. It is for this reason that they always remain fearful of Allah. But If the exception is regarded adjoining with the subject, then the meaning of the verse would be that Allah's messengers do not get frightened except those who have committed some trifle or minor mistake and have repented on that. In that situation such trifle sins are forgiven. But the actual position is that even if there were some minor slips by the messengers, they were not regarded as sins – neither small nor big. Although they looked like sins but factually they were errors of *ijtihad*. According to this interpretation, this exception is an allusion toward the incident of the Egyptian who was killed by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام by error of judgement. Although this error was pardoned by Allah Ta'ālā, yet its effect remained with Mūsā عليه السلام leaving some fear of the incident. Had this incident not have occurred, there would not have been any fear of the sort.

Verses 15 - 19

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ وَسُلَيْمٰنَ عِلْمًا ۚ وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ فَضَّلَنَا عَلٰى
كَثِيْرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۵﴾ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنُ دَاوٗدَ وَقَالَ يٰۤاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَاُوْتِيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ ۗ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ

الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمٰنَ جُنُوْدُهٗ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ حَتّٰىٓ اِذَآ اَتَوْا عَلٰى وَادِ النَّمْلِ ۙ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يّٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوْا مَسٰكِنَكُمْ ۚ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمٰنُ وَجُنُوْدُهٗ ۙ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِيْٓ اَنْ اَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلٰى وَالِدَيَّ وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰىهُ وَاَدْخِلْنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِيْ عِبَادِكَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾

And surely We gave knowledge to Dāwūd and Sulaimān. And they said, "Praise belongs to Allah who made us excel many of His believing slaves. [15] **And Sulaimān inherited (the traits of) Dāwūd and said, "O people we have been taught the speech of birds and we have been given of everything. Indeed, this is the evident grace (of Allah)."** [16]

And mustered for Sulaimān were his forces from among the Jinns and the humans and the birds. So all of them were kept under (his) control, [17] **until when they reached the valley of the ants, one of the ants said, "O ants, enter your dwelling places, lest Sulaimān and his armies crush you unknowingly."** [18] **So he (Sulaimān) smiled, laughing at her speech and said, "My Lord, enable me that I become grateful to Your favour that you have bestowed on me and on my parents and that I do the good deeds You like, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves."** [19]

Commentary

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ وَسُلَيْمٰنَ عِلْمًا

And surely We gave knowledge to Dāwūd and Sulaimān. (27:15)

The knowledge given to Sayyidnā Dāwūd and Sulaimān علیهما السلام was obviously the special knowledge normally given to the prophets about their functions and obligations as prophets, but at the same time it may also include other sciences and arts, as Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was given the art of making armors. Sayyidnā Dāwūd and Sulaimān علیهما السلام

enjoyed a special position among the prophets in that they were also bestowed with the empire along with the prophethood. The empire was of a very special nature in that they ruled over not only the humans but also the Jinns and animals. While relating all these graces, knowledge is mentioned first, which is a clear hint that knowledge is superior and paramount among them all. (Qurṭubī)

There is no heritage of wealth among the prophets

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنُ دَاوٗدَ (And Sulaimān inherited Dāwūd - 27:16). The inheritance mentioned in this verse is not the inheritance of wealth and property, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has clearly declared that the prophets do neither inherit the property of anyone nor does their property is inherited by anyone. Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd have reported from Sayyidnā Abuddardā' رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'Ulamā' (men of knowledge) are the inheritors of prophets, but the prophets did not leave *dirhams* or *dinars* (wealth) as their inheritance; instead, they have left knowledge as their heritage. Al-Kulaini, the famous Shi'ite scholar, has reported from Sayyidna Ja'far Aṣ-ṣādiq that he said, "Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was the inheritor of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the inheritor of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. (Rūḥ from al-Kulaini). This statement makes the issue very clear that the inheritance is used here in the sense of heritage of knowledge (because nobody can claim that the Holy Prophet ﷺ inherited the property of Sulaimān عليه السلام. Rationally speaking also, here inheritance cannot mean wealth, because when Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام died he had 19 sons, hence if inheritance of wealth was meant to be distributed, then all these sons would have been entitled for the inheritance, and it cannot be exclusive to Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام alone. It is, therefore, quite clear that the inheritance meant here is the one in which the brothers were not included and only Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was the inheritor. This could only be the inheritance of knowledge and prophethood. Along with that inheritance, Allah Ta'ālā also graced him with the empire of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and furthermore control over the Jinns, birds, animals and the wind. In the light of these proofs, the narration of Ṭabrasī is proved to be wrong in which he has regarded inheritance as that of wealth on authority of some Imāms of Ahl-ul-Bait. (Rūḥ)

The period between the death of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام and the

birth of the last of the prophets the Holy Prophet ﷺ was seventeen hundred years, while Jews calculate this period as fourteen hundred years. The life span of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was a little over fifty years. (Qurṭubī)

It is permissible to use plural form for one's own self, provided it is not out of arrogance

عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا (27:16). Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام has used plural form for himself as a regal idiom, although he was alone. It was to impress his subjects, so that they do not indulge in indolence in the obedience of Allah Ta'ālā and in following him. Similarly, there is no harm if the rulers and officials also use plural form for themselves while they are in the company of their subjects, provided it is for the esteem of the office they are holding and not out of arrogance.

Birds and animals also have sense and intelligence

There is sense and intelligence to some degree in all animals and birds. However, it is not developed to such an extent that they were made to follow any injunctions of the Sharī'ah. But the humans and jinns are bestowed with such perfected sense and intelligence that they are made the addressee and followers of the injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā. Imām Shafi'i رحمه الله تعالى has said that dove is the cleverest of all the birds, and Ibn 'Aṭiyyah has said that ant is very intelligent animal; its smelling power is very strong . If it gets hold of a grain it breaks it into two, so that it does not germinate, and thus it stock its food for the winters. (Qurṭubī)

Special Note

The expression "speech of birds" is used in the verse because of the incident of the hoopoe which is a bird, otherwise Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was taught languages of all the beasts, birds and the insects, as mentioned in the next verse about understanding the language of the ant. Imām Qurṭubī has mentioned in his Tafsīr different incidents in which Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام told the people how different birds chirped and what did they mean. The chirping of each bird was a word of advice.

وَأُوتِينَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (and we have been given of every thing -16). The word كُلّ (every) applies to everything of a kind, but sometimes its application is not universal but pertains to a specific purpose . Here also it is used in

that sense and "everything" refers to those things only which are needed by the government or an empire. Otherwise it is obvious that they did not have aeroplanes, motor cars or railways in those days.

رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِىٓ (My Lord, enable me - 27:19). It is derived from وَزْع (*waz'*), which lexically means to stop or restrain. Here it means 'enable me with Divine help so that I should have the trait of gratitude with me all the time and do not part with it ever', which will result in restraint. In the earlier verse فَهُمْ يُوزَعُوْنَ (27:17) (translated as "kept under control" it was also used in the same sense, that in order to save them from confusion because of their large number the armies were restrained.

وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰهُ (and that I do the good deeds You like - 27:19). Here رضا (liking) means acceptance. Thus the meaning is 'Yā Allah! Grace me with Divine help for such righteous deeds which are acceptable to You'. From this it is argued in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī that it is not necessary for the righteous deeds to be accepted, but their acceptance is dependent on certain conditions. It is further explained that there is no relation between righteousness and acceptance either rationally or in religious law. It is for this reason that the prophets used to pray for the acceptance of their righteous deeds. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Isma'īl عليهما السلام prayed while constructing the House of Allah رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا (Our Lord accept from us - 2:127). It shows that after doing a good deed, one should not be complacent, but should pray to Allah for its acceptance.

Despite having done good deeds and their acceptance the entry into Paradise will not be possible without the grace of Allah

وَاَدْخِلْنِىْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِىْ عِبَادِكَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ (And admit me, by your mercy, among your righteous slaves - 27:19). Despite having performed good deeds and their acceptance, the entry into Paradise will depend on the grace and kindness of Allah Ta'ālā. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that no one will enter into Paradise relying only on his deeds. So the companions enquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ "Even you too?", and he answered "Yes, me too, but I am surrounded by Allah's favour and grace". (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was also praying for the grace of Allah for the entry into Paradise in these words 'O Allah, grace me also with your favour so that I become entitled to enter Paradise'.

Verses 20 - 28

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَالِيَ لَآ أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ ۖ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَآئِبِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْلَأَاذْبَحَنَّهُٓ أَوْلَيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطتُّ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَ جِئْتُكَ مِن سَبَإٍۢ بِنَبَإٍ يَّقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنِّي وَجَدتُّ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَ أُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَجَدتُّهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ اللّٰهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبْءَ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَ مَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٦﴾ السجدة قَالَ سَنَنظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ اِذْهَب بِّكِتٰبِي هٰذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And (once) he (Sulaimān) checked the birds and said, "What is wrong with me that I do not see the *hudhud* (hoopoe)? Rather he has disappeared. [20] **I will punish him with a severe punishment or slaughter him unless he brings to me a clear plea."** [21] **Then the bird did not take long and said (to Sulaimān), "I have discovered what you did not, and have brought to you a sure information from Saba' (Sheba).** [22] **I have found a woman ruling over them and she has been given of everything (she needs) and she has a great throne.** [23] **I have found her and her people prostrating to the sun, instead of Allah, and the Satan has beautified their deeds for them and has prevented them from the way, so they do not take the right path,** [24] **that is, they do not prostrate to Allah who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and the earth and who knows whatever you conceal and whatever you reveal, Allah! There is no god but He, the Lord of the Great Throne."** [26]

He (Sulaimān) said, "We shall see whether you have told the truth or you are one of the liars. [27] **Go with this letter of mine and deliver it down to them, then turn back from them and see what they return."** [28]

Commentary

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ (And he checked the birds - 27:20). The word تفقد (*tafaqqud*) means to verify about the presence or absence of some people. Hence it is translated as to check. Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā the rule over Jinns, the beasts and the birds, apart from humans. As it is customary for the ruler to look after and take care of all of his subjects, it is stated in this verse تَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ. That is Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام inspected the birds from his subjects, and made a note of the presence and absence of them all. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also had the habit to keep himself informed about the well-being of his companions. If some one was absent, he used to go to his house to find out his welfare. If any one was sick, he would go and visit him and do the needful nursing. If some one was afflicted with any trouble, he would make the effort to remove it.

It is necessary for the rulers to take care of their subjects and for the saints of their disciples and students

This verse has proved that Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام used to keep an eye on all types of his subjects, and used to keep himself fully informed about them, so much so that the absence of a small and weak bird like a hoopoe which has a small population compared to other birds, did not go unnoticed from him. It is also possible that his specific enquiry about the hoopoe was due to its small population and weak make-up among the species of birds. Therefore, he made special effort to keep his eyes on the weaker section of his subjects.

Among the companions, Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه established the traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in totality during his tenure as caliph. He used to go round the streets of Madīnah during the nights to keep him fully abreast with the state of affairs. If he found any one in distress or need, he would help him out. A number of such incidents are related in his biography. He used to say "If a wolf kills a lamb by the side of river Euphrates, for that too 'Umar will be answerable". (Qurṭubī)

Such were the principles of rule and administration, which were taught by the prophets and practically demonstrated by the revered

companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . Because of these practices, the entire populace, both Muslims and non-Muslims, used to live in complete harmony and tranquility. Such justice and fair play, composure and tranquility were never witnessed ever in the whole world after their time.

مَالِيَ لَآ اَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ ز اَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَآئِبِيْنَ

"What is wrong with me that I do not see the hoopoe; rather he has disappeared? - 27:20

Taking account of one's own Self

Apparently Sulaimān عليه السلام should have said at this occasion,"What is wrong with the hoopoe that he is absent?" But Sulaimān عليه السلام asked about his own wrong when he said, "What is wrong with *me*?" Perhaps, it was because the hoopoe and all other birds were put under his control as a special reward. Initially it crossed his mind momentarily that probably His blessings have been curtailed for some slip on his part that a species of birds (the hoopoe) was not present. So, he made some soul searching to find out what could have been the reason for its absence? It was a case similar to that of the mystic saints who make enquiries from their Self before looking into the material causes for the relief of any distress, or when any blessing is reduced for them. It is their practice to take into account of any possible slips on their part in paying gratitude to Allah Ta'ālā for His bounties, which might have caused the withdrawal of the blessings from them. Qurṭubī has quoted here the practice of these saints on the authority of Ibn al-'Arabī in the following words:

اذا فقدوا آمالهم تفقّدوا اعمالهم That is 'when these saints do not succeed in their objectives, they take stock of their deeds to find out where have they committed the mistake'.

After this initial stock-taking of Self and due considerations and deliberations it is said اَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَآئِبِيْنَ (rather, he has disappeared - 27:20). Here the word اَمْ is used for the meaning of the word بَلْ (rather) (Qurṭubī). Therefore, the meaning of the sentence is 'It is not that my sight has faltered in locating the hoopoe, but in fact it is not present'.

Reason for picking up hoopoe from among the birds, and an important warning

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه was asked as to what was the

reason that the hoopoe was picked up from all the birds. He replied that Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام had camped at a place where there was no water, and Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed such a peculiar instinct to hoopoe that it can see things under the ground and can also locate the underground water. Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام wanted to find out, through the proficiency of the hoopoe, the depth and extent of the underground water. Having known the location of the underground water, he would have commanded the Jinns to excavate the ground to bring the water up – a task they would have performed very quickly. Paradoxically, despite having the piercing sight, the hoopoe gets entrapped in the nets of the hunters. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has commented on this:

قف یا وقّاف کیف یری الهدهد باطن الارض وهو لایرٰی الفخّ حین یقع فیه (قرطبی)

> 'O the people of knowledge! try to understand this fact that the hoopoe has the ability to see things under the ground, but the net spread out over the ground gets obscured from its sight, and hence it gets entrapped in that'.

The bottom line to understand is that whatever is destined for a person through the divine decree, whether it is trouble or comfort, has to be enforced, and no one can escape from it by his wisdom, insight or through the use of force or money.

لَاُعَذِّبَنَّهٗ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا اَوْلَا اَذْبَحَنَّهٗ

I will punish him with a severe punishment - 27:21

It is part of the political sagacity to punish the absentee after making due scrutiny.

It is permissible to punish a lethargic animal moderately

Allah Ta'ālā had permitted Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام to punish the animals in the same way, as He had permitted people of all ages, a permission which is still valid, to slaughter them to make use of their flesh, bones, skin etc. Similarly, if the domestic animals, such as cow, horse, camel, donkey etc., do not perform their normal duty, then it is permissible even now to punish them moderately for disciplining. Punishing animals, other than domestic, is not permissible under Islamic law. (Qurṭubī)

اَوْلَيَاْتِيَنِّىْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ

Unless he brings to me a clear plea. - 27:21

That is, if the hoopoe offers a plausible excuse for its absence, then it will be saved from the punishment. There is a subtle hint in it that it is expected of a ruler or an administrator that if someone falters doing something, then it should be thoroughly investigated before punishing him. The punishment should be enforced only when the guilt is established, otherwise he should be forgiven.

اَحَطْتُّ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهٖ (I have discovered what you did not - 27:22). That is, the hoopoe said while offering its excuse that it knew something which he did not know. What it meant was that it had brought information, which he (Sulaimān عليه السلام) did not know before.

The prophets do not have the knowledge of the unknown

Imām Qurṭubī has deduced from this incident that the prophets do not have the knowledge of the unseen (*'Ilm ul-ghayb*), so that they could know all about every thing. It is quite evident from this verse.

وَ جِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَاٍۭ بِنَبَاٍ يَّقِيْنٍ

"And have brought to you a sure information from Saba' (Sheba)". 27:22

Saba' (Sheba) (سَبَاء) is a well-known city of Yemen, and its other name is Ma'ārib (مَارِب). The distance between San'ā', the capital of Yemen, and Saba' is three day's journey.

Is it proper for a junior to say to his senior that he knows more than him?

On the basis of this conversation by the hoopoe, some people have deduced that it is appropriate for a pupil to say to his teacher or for a common man to say to a knowledgeable person that he knows more than the latter on the subject, provided he is absolutely confident that his knowledge on that subject is really more than others. But it is argued in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī that such an assertion before the elders and scholars is against the etiquettes, and should be avoided. This argument, however, does not apply to the conversation of the hoopoe, because it made that statement to save itself from the punishment and to justify its excuse for the absence. The hoopoe actually wanted to place before Sulaimān عليه السلام the exact position, so that he could understand the reason for its absence.

In such situations it is not improper if something is said against the normal etiquettes.

اِنِّیْ وَجَدْتُّ امْرَاَةً تَمْلِکُھُمْ

I have found a woman ruling over them, - 27:23

The name of this woman is given in the history as Bilqīs, daughter of Sharāḥīl. But in some other narrations, it is mentioned that her mother was a jinni whose name was Bal'amah, daughter of Shīṣān. (Wuhaib b. Jarīr has reported this from Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad, Qurṭubī) Her grandfather, Hudahud, was a great king and controlled the entire land of Yemen. He had forty sons. All these sons became kings. Her father, Sūrah, had married a jinni woman, who gave birth to her (Bilqīs). Different reasons are given for his marriage to a jinni. One of them being that he used to say with arrogance "No one from you is a match for me; hence I will not marry. It is because I do not like marrying outside my matching clan". As a result of this, people got him married to a jinni woman. (Qurṭubī) Perhaps it was his conceit that he deemed his own people as not his equal. This did not go well with the Divine writ and he was made to marry a jinni woman, who was neither from his family nor his kind or race.

Is it permissible to marry a jinni?

Some people have expressed doubt on the question, because they thought the jinns are not capable of reproducing like the humans. Ibn-al-'Arabī has opined in his commentary that this is a wrong conception. It is established through authentic aḥādīth that jinns also possess all the requisites of reproduction and the essentials of male and female, as in humans.

There is another aspect to this question from the angle of Islamic law. That is, whether it is permissible for a man to marry a jinni woman? On this aspect there are different views of the Islamic jurists. Some have ruled that it is permissible, while others have ruled it out, because of their different kind, like the animals. In the book named as (آکام المرجان فی أحکام الجانّ) this subject is discussed in detail, where some incidents are quoted mentioning that Muslim men married Muslim jinni women, and they also gave birth to children. Here this subject is irrelevant, because the father of Bilqīs, who married the jinni woman, was not a Muslim. Hence, the question of permissibility does not arise here. In Islamic law the lineage is

based on father, and the father of Bilqīs was a human. Therefore, Bilqīs would also be regarded as a human. In some narrations, marriage of Sulaimān عليه السلام with Bilqīs is mentioned. Even if these narrations are correct, it does not corroborate permissibility to marry a *jinni* woman, because Bilqīs herself was not a jinni, though her mother might have been one. Only Allah knows best. The marriage of Sulaimān عليه السلام will be discussed later in this commentary.

Is it permissible for a woman to be king or the head or Imām of a people?

It is reported in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt that the people of Persia have made the daughter of Kisrā as their queen, he said لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَّوْا اَمْرَهُمْ اِمْرَأَةً. That is, "Those people will never prosper who give control of authority to a woman". It is for this verdict that scholars are unanimous on the point that the control of a government, an empire or caliphate cannot be assigned to a woman. Rather the greater *imāmah* (*al-imāmah al-kubrā*) is also allowed only to men folk, like the Imāmah for prayers. As for Bilqīs being the queen of Saba', it does not make it to be a religious decree, unless it is proven that Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام had married her, and then retained her as the queen. This assumption is not proven by any authentic narration, which could be trusted for the purpose of legislation of religious laws.

وَاُوْتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

She has been given of everything - 23

It means that whatever services are needed to a king or an aristocrat according to their time, they all were available to her. It is, however, obvious that those things that were not invented by then, their unavailability is not in conflict with this verse.

وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيْمٌ (And she has a great throne - 23) Literal meaning of 'Arsh (عَرْش) is throne of the empire. A narration is attributed to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the length of the throne of Bilqīs was eighty yards, its breadth was forty yards and height thirty yards. It was profusely decorated with pearls, red rubies, topaz and olivine, and its legs were studded with precious stones and pearls. Its curtains were made of silk and fine cloth. The throne was secured within seven buildings, one within

the other, all well protected and locked.

وَجَدْتُّهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُوْنَ لِلشَّمْسِ

I have found her and her people prostrating to the sun - 27:24

This shows that her people were star-worshippers and used to worship the sun. Some believe that they were Zoroastrians, who worship fire and all forms of light.

اَلاَّ يَسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِى يُخْرِجُ الْخَبْ ءَ (that is, they do not prostrate to Allah who bring forth what is hidden - 25).This sentence is linked with the previous one, "The Satan has beautified their deeds - 26" and the sense is that the Satan had engrained in their minds that they should not bow down before Allah, or had prevented them from the righteous path so that they should not prostrate before Allah Ta'ālā.

Letters and writings are enough proof on religious matters in the normal circumstances

اِذْهَبْ بِّكِتٰبِىْ هٰذَا (Go with this letter of mine - 28). Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام considered it enough to write to the queen of Saba' (Sheba) for the fulfillment of his duty to invite her to faith, and hence sent her a letter. This shows that in the normal circumstances the letter or writing is an acceptable proof. The religious jurists did not accept a letter as an evidence only where a proper personal evidence is required under Islamic law, because testimony is not allowed on telephone or by letter. It has been made mandatory for the witnesses to appear in person before the court. There is a lot of wisdom in this law. Under any law of the world prevalent in any country it is compulsory for the witnesses to appear before the court in person, and the testimony through letter or telephone is not accepted.

Writing letters and sending them to the disbelievers is permissible

Another matter that has been proved by the letter of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام is that in preaching of religion and invitation to Islam it is permissible to write letters to disbelievers and infidels. According to many Ṣaḥīḥ āḥādīth it is established that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had also written letters to many infidels.

Social etiquettes should always be observed, no matter if it is a gathering of infidels

فَاَلْقِهْ اِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ

Throw it down to them, then turn back from them - 27:28

When Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام made use of the hoopoe as a courier, he also taught him the social etiquette that after delivering the letter to Queen of Saba' it should move out of her court, which is the norm of the royal courts. This shows that observance of social etiquettes and good human behavior is desirable as a general rule.

Verses 29 - 37

قَالَتْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اِنِّیْٓ اُلْقِیَ اِلَیَّ كِتٰبٌ كَرِیْمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ سُلَیْمٰنَ وَاِنَّهٗ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ﴿٣٠﴾ اَلَّا تَعْلُوْا عَلَیَّ وَاْتُوْنِیْ مُسْلِمِیْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَتْ یٰٓاَیُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اَفْتُوْنِیْ فِیْٓ اَمْرِیْ ۚ مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً اَمْرًا حَتّٰی تَشْهَدُوْنِ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالُوْا نَحْنُ اُولُوْا قُوَّةٍ وَّاُولُوْا بَاْسٍ شَدِیْدٍ ۙ وَّالْاَمْرُ اِلَیْكِ فَانْظُرِیْ مَاذَا تَاْمُرِیْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَتْ اِنَّ الْمُلُوْكَ اِذَا دَخَلُوْا قَرْیَةً اَفْسَدُوْهَا وَجَعَلُوْٓا اَعِزَّةَ اَهْلِهَآ اَذِلَّةً ۚ وَكَذٰلِكَ یَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَاِنِّیْ مُرْسِلَةٌ اِلَیْهِمْ بِهَدِیَّةٍ فَنٰظِرَةٌ ۢ بِمَ یَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ سُلَیْمٰنَ قَالَ اَتُمِدُّوْنَنِ بِمَالٍ ۫ فَمَآ اٰتٰىنِ ۦ اللّٰهُ خَیْرٌ مِّمَّآ اٰتٰىكُمْ ۚ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ بِهَدِیَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِرْجِعْ اِلَیْهِمْ فَلَنَاْتِیَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُوْدٍ لَّا قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ مِّنْهَآ اَذِلَّةً وَّهُمْ صٰغِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾

She (the queen) said (to her officials after receiving the letter), "O chieftains, there has been delivered to me an esteemed letter. [29] **It is from Sulaimān and it is (in the following words:) With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.** [30] **Do not rebel against me and come to me in submission."** [31] **She said, "O chieftains, advise me in the matter I have (before me). I am not the one who decides a matter absolutely unless you are present with me."** [32] **They said, "We are powerful and tough fighters, and the decision lies with**

you; so consider what command you should give." [33] **She said, "In fact when the kings enter a town, they put it to disorder and put its honorable citizens to disgrace, and this is how they normally do.** [34] **And I am going to send a gift to them, then see, what response the envoys will bring back."** [35]

So when he (the envoy) came to Sulaimān, he said, "Are you extending a financial aid to me? So what Allah has given me is much better than what He has given to you. But you yourselves are proud of your gift. [36] **Go back to them, and we will bring to them forces they have no power to face, and we will certainly drive them out from there in humiliation while they are disgraced."** [37]

Commentary

قَالَتْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اِنِّيْٓ اُلْقِيَ اِلَيَّ كِتٰبٌ كَرِيْمٌ

She (the queen) said (to her officials after receiving the letter), "O chieftains, there has been thrown to me an esteemed letter, 27:29.

Literal meaning of Karīm is respectable, honorable or esteemed, and idiomatically this word is used for a letter when it is sealed. This is why Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Qatādah, Zohair رحمهم الله تعالى etc. have interpreted the expression كِتَابٌ كَرِيْمٌ as the sealed book, which indicates that Sayyidnā Sulaimān ﷺ had put his seal on the letter. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt about the tradition of the non-Arab kings that they do not read the letter if it is not sealed, he got a seal made for himself, and used it on the letters he sent to Caesar and Chosro. It shows that the practice of sealing a letter is to show respect to the letter as well as to the addressee. The present day practice is to secure the letter in an envelope, which is as good as sealing it. Where show of respect to the addressee is intended, it is closer to the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to secure it in an envelope.

The language of the letter of Sulaiman ﷺ

Although Sayyidnā Sulaimān ﷺ was not an Arab, yet it is not unlikely that he knew the Arabic language, especially when he knew the languages of the animals. As the Arabic language is supreme among all the languages, it is possible that he might have written the letter in Arabic. It is also probable because Bilqīs was an Arab by race, and she

read the letter and understood it. The other probability is that he had written the letter in his own language and an interpreter read it for her. (Rūḥ)

Some rules of writing letters

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمٰنَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

> It is from Sulaimān and it is (in the following words:) With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful. 27:30

There is not a single aspect of human life on which Qur'ān does not provide guidance. Mutual exchange of welfare and other information through letters is part of human requirements. In this Sūrah, full text of the letter from Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام to Queen Saba' has been reproduced. This is a letter from a prophet, and Qur'ān has reproduced it as an approved format for a letter. Hence, it should be taken in that light and Muslims should try to follow the guidance provided in it for letter writing.

Writer should first write his name and then of the addressee

The very first guidance provided in this letter is that Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام has begun it by writing his name. How did he write the name of the addressee, it is not mentioned in the Qur'ān. However, it does tell us that it was the practice of the prophets to write their name first, in which there are many benefits. For instance, the addressee would know even before reading the letter from whom it has come. So he would read the letter in the backdrop of his relations with the writer, and any confusion about the identity of the writer would be eliminated right in the beginning. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had also adopted the same practice in all his letters addressed to various persons, and began the letter with the wordings من محمّد عبد الله ورسوله (From Muḥammad, the slave of Allah and His messenger)

A question may arise here as to whether it would be a disrespect to the addressee if a junior writes his name first while writing to his elder, teacher or senior in status? So, is it appropriate to follow this practice or not? In this respect the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ had acted differently. Most of them preferred to follow the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and not the requirement of the formality, and wrote their names first even when writing to the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. Rūḥ

ūl-Ma'ānī has reproduced a narration of Sayyidnā 'Anas ﷺ from al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ as follows:

ما كان احد اعظم حرمة من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، وكان اصحابه اذا كتبوا اليه كتابًا بدأوا بانفسهم. قلت: وكتاب علاء الحضرمى رضى الله عنه يشهد له على ماروى.

"No human is more revered than the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but when his companions used to write to him, they would first write their names, and I say that Sayyidnā 'Alā' Al-Ḥadramī's letter, which he wrote to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is a proof to that."

However, after quoting these narrations in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī it is observed that all this discussion is about the preferred way, otherwise both ways are permissible. If some one writes his name in the last, that too is correct. Religious jurist Abū al-Layth has written in his Bustan that if some one starts with the name of the addressee, no one can question its permissibility, because this has also been the practice among the Muslims for long, and no one has objected to that. (Rūḥ ūl-Ma'ānī, Qurṭubī)

Replying to letters is also a practice of the prophets

It is observed in Tafsīr ul-Qurṭubī that if someone receives a letter, it is incumbent upon him to answer it, because a letter from someone not present is as good as the greeting of the one who is present. It is attributed to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ in a narration that he used to regard the reply of a letter as much obligatory as the reply to a greeting by *salām*. (Qurṭubī)

Starting letters with Bismillah

The letter of Sayyidnā Sulaimān ﷺ and all the letters sent by the Holy Prophet ﷺ have established that writing Bismillah at the beginning of a letter was the practice of the prophets. As to the question whether Bismillah should precede the name of the writer or not, the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was that he always put Bismillah before his name, and the name of the addressee after his own name. But in the Qur'ān the order is reversed and the name of Sayyidnā Sulaimān ﷺ is written first and then Bismillah. Therefore, it is also in order if the name of the writer is written first and then Bismillah. But Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported on the authority of Yazīd Ibn Raumān that in fact Sayyidnā Sulaimān ﷺ had

written his letter in this manner: بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم. من سليمان بن داود الى بلقيس ابنة ذى شرح وقومها. ان لاتعلوا عَلَيَّ وَاتُوْنِى مُسْلِمِيْنَ (which means that he wrote Bismillah before his name) but when Bilqīs read out this letter to her people, she mentioned the name of Sulaimān عليه السلام first in order to let them know the name of the writer. The Holy Qur'ān has copied what Bilqīs had uttered. There is no mention in the Qur'ān whether Bismillah was written first or the name of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام in the original letter. There is yet another possibility that the name of Sulaimān عليه السلام was written on the envelope and Bismillah at the top of the letter, and when Bilqīs read out the letter to her people she announced the name of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام first.

Ruling

The original tradition (Sunnah) of letter writing is that all letters should begin with Bismillah. However, the religious jurists have ruled, on the authority of the indications given in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, that if there is a risk of disrespect to the name of Allah on the apprehension that the paper on which Bismillah is written would be thrown away, then it is not right to write Bismillah, lest one should get involved in sin. The present day practice is that letters are thrown away after reading and they end up in garbage. Hence, it is better to perform Sunnah by reciting Bismillah orally before starting the letter, rather than writing it on paper.

Can a paper bearing a Qur'ānic verse be given in the hands of a disbeliever?

Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام had sent this letter to Bilqīs when she was not a Muslim, but بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ was written on it. It confirms that this is permissible. The non-Arab kings to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ had written letters were disbelievers. But the letters contained some Qur'ānic verses too. It should be understood that although it is not permitted to hand over the Holy Qur'ān to infidels, but any book or paper containing some verses of the Qur'ān does not qualify to be the Qur'ān itself; hence, such papers or books can be handed over to an infidel or to someone without wuḍū' (ablution). (Alamgiri)

Letters should be written short, comprehensive, eloquent and effective

Looking at the letter of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام one cannot avoid noticing that it is so comprehensive that all important matters have been

put together in a few sentences, maintaining the high standard of eloquence alongwith the royal grandeur in front of the infidels. At the same time perfected attributes of Allah Ta'ālā are also described along with an invitation towards Islam. The condemnation of conceit and arrogance is also noticeable. As a matter of fact, this letter is a specimen of the marvel of Qur'ān. Sayyidnā Qatadah ﷺ has stated that it was the practice in letter writing by all the prophets to make it brief but at the same time ensuring that nothing mentionable is left out. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Consultation in important matters is a Sunnah. It provides the benefit of having views of others, and gives them a sense of participation

قَالَتْ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اَفْتُوْنِىْ فِىْۤ اَمْرِىْ ۚ مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً اَمْرًا حَتّٰى تَشْهَدُوْنِ

She said, "O chieftains, advise me in the matter I have (before me). I am not the one who decides a matter absolutely unless you are present with me." - 32

The word اَفْتُوْنِىْ is derived from Fatwā فَتْوٰى, which means answering some specific issue. Here it means to give counsel or to express one's views. When Queen Bilqīs received the letter of Sayyidnā Ṣulaimān عليه السلام she called the members of her government and asked their view as to what she should do. Before asking their view on the matter, she encouraged and pleased them by declaring that she did not take decisions without consulting them. Because of her remarks, the ministers and the generals expressed their readiness to sacrifice every thing they had in order to follow her command. نَحْنُ اُولُوْا قُوَّةٍ وَّاُولُوْا بَاْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ وَّالْاَمْرُ اِلَيْكِ ("We are powerful and tough fighters, and the decision lies with you - 33). Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ has related that according to his information there were 313 members in her consultative committee, and each one of them represented and enjoyed the support of ten thousand persons. (Qurṭubī)

This statement brings to light that having consultation with supporters is an old practice. Islam has attached great importance to consultation and has made this mandatory for the government functionaries. So much so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who was the recipient of revelations from Allah Ta'ālā and also used to get direct guidance from Him (thus did not have any need for consultation or advice), was also commanded to follow this practice, in order to set up a

tradition for his followers.The Holy Qur'ān directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ, وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى الْاَمْرِ (3:159) that is, he should consult them in the matters. There is a sense of participation for the companions in this command, and an advice for the coming generations that the government functionaries must always consult on important matters.

Reaction of Queen Bilqīs on the letter of Sulaimān

After having consulted the functionaries of her government and gaining their confidence, she herself developed a strategy that she should initially test out the real intention of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام and to find out whether he was actually a prophet and messenger of God, and whether he was really conveying the message of God or he was aspiring for a greater empire. The purpose behind this strategy was to find out that if he was a prophet in reality, then his command should be followed and no hostility be adopted against him. On the other hand if he was only a king and wished to expand his empire by subjugating her kingdom, then a different plan be worked out to face the challenge. To test out the real intention of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام she adopted the tactic of sending to him precious gifts and presents. If he becomes satisfied after receiving the gifts, then it would indicate that he was only a king and had approached her with mundane motives. On the other hand, if he was actually a prophet then he would not agree on any thing other than acceptance of Islam. Ibn Jarīr has reported this explanation from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه Mujāhid, Ibn Juraij, and Ibn Wahb رحمهم الله تعالى with several chins of narrators.The same subject is elaborated in the following verse:

وَاِنِّى مُرْسِلَةٌ اِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنٰظِرَةٌۢ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ

And I am going to send a gift to them, then see, what response the envoys will bring back." 27:35.

Appearance of envoys of Bilqīs in the court of Sulaimān عليه السلام

Historical Isra'īli legends describe in great detail the incident of the visit of the envoys of Bilqīs and the gifts they had taken with them. All versions of the legends agree on that the gifts included some gold bricks, some precious stones, one hundred slaves and one hundred slave girls. But the slave girls were dressed in men's clothes and the slaves were dressed in ladies outfits. There was also a letter from Bilqīs, in which

there were some questions for testing Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. In the selection of gifts also, his test was intended. Allah Ta'ālā had passed on detailed information of gifts to Sulaimān عليه السلام even before their arrival. Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام commanded the Jinns to lay out a floor of gold and silver bricks over a thirty miles stretch from his court, and that strange looking animals be lined up on either side of this pathway. Their excrement of bowels was also to be placed on the floor of gold and silver. Similarly, his court was decorated with special attention. Four thousand chairs of gold were placed on the left side and four thousand on the right side of the main hall for the scholars, ministers, and other officials of the court. The entire hall was bedecked with precious stones. When Bilqīs's envoys saw animals standing on the floor of gold bricks, they were embarrassed with the gifts they had brought with them. It is reported in some narrations that they threw away their gold bricks. Then as they proceeded, they saw rows of beasts and birds on either side of the pathway. After that they came across the rows of jinns. Seeing them, they were browbeaten. Ultimately, when they reached the court and stood before Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام, he received them with dignity, and entertained them with veneration. But he returned all their gifts and presents, and answered all the questions sent up by Bilqīs. (Qurṭubī)

Return of the presents of Bilqīs by Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام

قَالَ اَتُمِدُّوْنَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَآ اٰتٰىنِ ءَ اللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّآ اٰتٰىكُمْ ۚ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُوْنَ

"Are you giving me an aid of wealth? So what Allah has given me is much better than He has given to you. But you yourselves are proud of your gift. 27:36.

When Bilqīs's envoys reached the court of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام with the gifts and presents sent by her, he said to them 'Do you wish to help me with wealth? Whatever wealth and bounties I have been given by Allah is much better than your wealth and material. Therefore, I do not accept your presents of wealth. You better take them away, and enjoy them yourself'.

Is it permissible to accept presents from infidels?

Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام did not accept the presents of Queen Bilqīs, which indicates that it is not permissible or not preferable to accept presents from infidels. The correct position about this question is that if

this may lead to weakening of one's position or that of Muslim community, or is likely to go against the expediency of the national interest, then it is prudent not to accept their presents. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī). But if the interest of the Muslims is in favour of acceptance, for instance if this gesture may lead the non-Muslims to the acceptance of Islam, or may ward off some impending danger to Islam, in such situations it is permitted. It was the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to accept presents from some infidels and reject them from others. It is reported in 'Umdatul Qārī Sharḥ al-Bukhārī (Kitāb ul-hibah) and Sharḥ-As- Siyar-Al-Kabr on the authority of Sayyidnā Ka'b ibn Mālik رحمه الله تعالیٰ that 'Āmir ibn Mālik, brother of Brā', went to Madīnah on some work, when he was a disbelieving infidel, and presented two horses and two pairs of garments to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He sent back these presents with the remarks "We do not accept presents from disbelievers". Once 'Iyāḍ ibn Ḥimār al-Mujashi'ī presented to him some thing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ enquired from him whether he was a Muslim, to which he replied in the negative. So he returned his presents, explaining that Allah Ta'ālā has commanded him not to accept presents from the disbelievers.

As against this there are other narrations reporting that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had accepted presents from some disbelievers. In one such narration, it is related that Abū Sufyān had presented to him a piece of leather when he was still a disbeliever, which the Holy Prophet ﷺ had accepted. Another narration has reported that a Christian had presented to him a very shiny piece of fine silk, which was also accepted by him.

Shamsul 'A'immah has commented after citing these narrations that, in his view, the reason of rejection and acceptance of these presents by the Holy Prophet ﷺ was that where he thought that by their rejection the disbeliever would come near Islam, he rejected them, and where he considered that their acceptance will help bring the disbeliever close to Islam he did that. ('Umdatul Qārī)

Bilqīs took the rejection of her presents by Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام as a sign of his prophethood - not because the acceptance of gifts from disbelievers is not permissible - but she had purposefully sent those presents as a bribe, in order to save herself from any attack from him.

Verses 38 - 41

قَالَ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن تَقُومَ مِن مَّقَامِكَ ۚ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ الَّذِي عِندَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِندَهُ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّي ۖ لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ۖ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

He said, "O chieftains, which one of you will bring her throne to me before they come to me submissively?" [38] **An *'ifrīt* (stalwart) from the Jinns said, "I will bring it to you before you rise up from your place, and for this (task) I am powerful, trust-worthy".** [39] **Said the one who had the knowledge of the book, "I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you." So when he saw it (the throne) well-placed before him, he said, "This is by the grace of my Lord, so that He may test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful is grateful for his own benefit, and whoever is ungrateful, then my Lord is Need-Free, Bountiful".** [40] **He said, "Disguise the throne for her, and we will see whether she discovers the truth or she is one of those who have no guidance."** [41]

Commentary

Bilqīs's appearance in the court of Sulaimān عليه السلام

Qurṭubī has reported, giving references of historical record, that Bilqīs's envoys returned from the court of Sulaimān عليه السلام totally dumb-founded and awe-struck, and conveyed his declaration of war to the queen. Then Bilqīs said to her people that she was already of the view that he was no ordinary king, but was on some special assignment from God, and that fighting with His messenger is like fighting with God, for which they did not have the strength. After making this statement, she started getting ready to go to Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. She took along

with her twelve thousand chiefs, commanding an army of hundred thousand men each.[1] Allah Ta'ālā had graced Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام with such awe and majesty that no one had the courage to speak before him. One day he saw a cloud of dust at some distance. So he asked from those who were present as to what that was. His people answered 'O messenger of Allah! Queen Bilqīs is coming with her people'. Some narrations relate that at that time she was about three miles from the court of Sulaimān عليه السلام. At that moment Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام turned to his courtiers and asked them:

قَالَ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اَيُّكُمْ يَاْتِيْنِىْ بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّاْتُوْنِىْ مُسْلِمِيْنَ

He said, "O chieftains, which one of you will bring her throne to me before they come to me submissively?" 27:38.

Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام was already informed that Bilqīs was coming to him to submit after having been impressed by his invitation. So he decided that, apart from royal grandeur, she should also witness a prophetic miracle, which should help her convert to faith. Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed the miracle of control of *jinns* to Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. After receiving the cue from Allah Ta'ālā, he fancied to have Bilqīs's throne brought to his court even before her arrival. So he commanded the jinni, who was also present in his court, to bring her throne. Selection of throne was presumably made on the basis that it was the most secured object of her treasure, which was kept in the impregnable inner most hall of the seven castles, one within the other, properly secured under lock. So much so that her own people could not reach there. Shifting of such a huge and secured object without breaking the lock or door to a place so far away from where it was placed, could not have been possible without the help and will of Allah Ta'ālā. This was an ideal way to make her see and realize the unlimited power and control of Allah. At the same time it was also intended to make her realize that the high position and status of

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1. The learned author has already mentioned that no authentic record is available on the details of this story. However there are some details found in the Israelite traditions some of which are reproduced here. This huge number of the army of Bilqīs is also taken from those traditions; otherwise, the number given is highly exaggerated on the face of it, and 'Allāmah 'Ālūsī has opined that the tradition giving such a huge number of the army seems to be a lie.

Sulaimān عليه السلام was actually bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā, which had enabled him to perform such super-human things. (Ibn Jarīr)

قَبۡلَ اَنۡ يَّاۡتُوۡنِىۡ مُسۡلِمِيۡنَ (before they come to me submissively - 27:38). The word مُسۡلِمِيۡنَ (*muslimīn*) is the plural of Muslim, the literal meaning of which is obedient or submissive. In conventional expression, 'Muslim' is equivalent of 'believer'. According to Sayyidnā ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, here *Muslimīn* is used in its literal meaning, that is, obedient or submissive. It is so because it was not established at that time that Queen Bilqīs had converted to Islam. She actually converted to Islam after talking to Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام, as is evident from the verses to follow now.

قَالَ الَّذِىۡ عِنۡدَهٗ عِلۡمٌ مِّنَ الۡكِتٰبِ (Said the one who had the knowledge of the book - 27:40). The question is as to who was this person? One possibility is that he was Sulaimān عليه السلام himself, because his knowledge of the book of Allah was most extensive. In that case this incident happened as a miracle. The objective was also that Bilqīs should have an experience of the prophetic miracle, so that no doubt was left in her mind. But Ibn Jarīr has reported from many commentators of the Qur'ān, like Qatādah, that he was a person from the companions of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. Qurṭubī has declared it to be the view of the majority. Ibn Ishaque has mentioned his name as 'Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā, and has opined that he was a friend of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. Some other narrations say that a cousin of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام had the knowledge of Al-Ism ul-A'ẓam, (a particular name of Allah Almighty) the speciality of which is that whatever blessing is invoked from Allah Ta'ālā by reciting this name, it is accepted, and anything requested is delivered from Him. It does not prove that Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام did not have the knowledge of Al-Ism-ul-A'ẓam. Rather it is quite likely that he considered it prudent to have the manifestation of the miracle by one of his people, which should have deeper impression on Bilqīs. Therefore, instead of performing the miracle himself, he addressed his people in the above manner. (كذا فى فصوص الحكم) In such a situation, this incident was a Karāmah, which was performed by 'Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā.

Difference between miracle and Karāmah

Miracles take place without any involvement of natural phenomena by the exclusive act and will of Allah Ta'ālā. It is clearly defined in the Qur'ān itself وَمَا رَمَيۡتَ اِذۡ رَمَيۡتَ وَ لٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَمٰى (You did not throw when you threw

but Allah did throw - 8:17). Likewise, there is no involvement of natural phenomena in the happening of Karāmah. They take place exclusively with the act and will of Allah Ta'ālā. This should also be understood that miracles and Karāmah do not take place with the wish or control of the person performing them, but only by the will and act of Allah Ta'ālā. The only difference between the two is that if such an unusual act is demonstrated through a prophet, it is known as a miracle; and if it is demonstrated through someone who is not a prophet, it is called Karāmah. In this particular incident if it is correct that 'Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā, who was a companion of Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام, performed it, then it will be called his Karāmah. The unusual acts performed by saints are in fact the reflection of the perfections of their prophets, which in turn are deemed to be the miracles of their prophet.

The incident of the throne of Bilqīs was a Karāmah or a Taṣarruf

Shaikh Muḥiyyuddīn ibn al-'Arabī has declared it as a Taṣarruf of 'Āṣif ibn Barkhiyā. In the general use of the term, Taṣarruf means to captivate the audience by the power of sight and mind, for which it is not necessary for the person performing it that he is a prophet or saint or even a Muslim. It is something like mesmerism or hypnotism. The saints have used this power occasionally for reforming and training of their disciples also. Ibn al-'Ārabi has explained that since prophets avoid using Taṣarruf, therefore Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام got this job done by 'Āṣif ibn Barkhiyā. But the Qur'ān has declared it the result of عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ (The knowledge of the book - 27:40). In the light of the wordings of the Qur'ān, it seems preferable that it was an outcome of some prayer or of Al-Ism ul-A'ẓam which falls within the purview of Karāmah, and has nothing to do with Taṣarruf.

The assertion اَنَا اٰتِيْكَ بِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّرْتَدَّ اِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ (I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you - 27:40) may create confusion, because it gives the impression that this act was carried out with intent and control. That being so, it is a sign of Taṣarruf, because Karāmah is not under the control of a saint. The answer to this doubt is that presumably Allah Ta'ālā had already given the signal that if there would be a desire for that, He would fulfill it in no time.

This explanation is taken from the commentary 'Aḥkam ul Qur'ān' by Sayyidī Ḥakīmul Ummah Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī, on Sūrah

An-Naml. Apart from that, he has also written a pamphlet on Taṣarruf in Arabic under the title 'At-Taṣarruf', which I have translated in Urdu and has been published separately.

Verses 42 - 44

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهٰكَذَا عَرْشُكِ ۖ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ ۚ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَّعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ
اللّٰهِ ۖ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كٰفِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ ۚ
فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَّكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقَيْهَا ۖ قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ
مِّنْ قَوَارِيرَ ۗ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمٰنَ
لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

So when she came, it was said (to her), "Is your throne like this?" She said, "It seems to be the same, and knowledge (of truth) was given to us even before this and we have already submitted." [42] **And she was prevented (from submitting before) by that which she used to worship instead of Allah. Indeed she was from a disbelieving people.** [43] **It was said to her, "Enter the palace." Then once she saw it, she thought it to be flowing water and uncovered her legs. He (Sulaimān) said, "This is a palace made of glasses." She said, "My Lord, I had surely wronged myself, and now I submit, alongwith Sulaimān, to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."** [44]

Commentary

Did Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام marry Bilqīs?

The story of Bilqīs has ended in the above verses on the statement that she converted to Islam after coming to Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام. What happened after that? The Qur'ān is silent on this. It is for this reason that when someone asked 'Abdullāh ibn 'Uyaynah whether Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام had married Bilqīs, he answered that her case has finished on this أَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (I submit, alongwith Sulaimān, to Allah, the Lord of the worlds - 44). The idea behind this

answer was that when Qur'ān has not divulged anything after that, it is not for us to probe any further. But Ibn 'Asākir has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام had married Bilqīs after that, and she was retained as the sovereign of her country. She was then sent back to Yemen, and Sayyidnā Sulaimān عليه السلام, used to visit her every month for three days. He got three palaces made for her in Yemen, which had no parallel of their kind. (Only God knows best)

Verses 45 - 53

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَٰلِحًا أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا ٱللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِٱلسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ ۖ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوا ٱطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَن مَّعَكَ ۚ قَالَ طَٰٓئِرُكُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَكَانَ فِى ٱلْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قَالُوا تَقَاسَمُوا بِٱللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُۥ وَأَهْلَهُۥ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِۦ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِۦ وَإِنَّا لَصَٰدِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا وَمَكَرْنَا مَكْرًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَٱنظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ ۙ أَنَّا دَمَّرْنَٰهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةًۢ بِمَا ظَلَمُوٓا ۗ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَنجَيْنَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

And We sent to Thamūd their brother Ṣāliḥ saying (to them), "Worship Allah". Then suddenly they became two groups quarrelling with each other. [45] **He said, "O my people, why do you seek evil to come sooner before good? Why do you not seek forgiveness from Allah, so that you are treated with mercy?"** [46] **They said, "We regard you and those with you as a sign of bad omen." He said, "Your omen is with Allah, but you are a people**

put to a test." [47]

And there were nine persons in the city who used to make mischief on the earth and did not put things right. [48] **They said, "Let us swear a mutual oath by Allah that we shall attack him (Ṣāliḥ) and his family at night, then will say to his heir, 'We did not witness the destruction of his family and we are really truthful.'"** [49] **And (thus) they devised a plan and We devised a plan, while they were not aware.** [50] **So look how was the fate of their plan, that We annihilated them and their people altogether.** [51] **Now those are their houses, lying empty because of the transgression they committed. Surely, in this there are signs for a people who have knowledge.** [52] **And We saved those who believed and who used to be God-fearing.** [53]

Commentary

لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ (why do you seek evil to come sooner before good? - 27:46). Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام is referring here to the demand of the infidels that he should bring the divine torment to them in this world, so that they may know his truthfulness. Therefore, "evil" in this sentence stands for torment, while "good" refers to their repentance and invoking divine mercy. It, therefore means, "Why are you asking me to bring the divine punishment before you repent?"

تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ (nine persons - 27:48). The word رَهْط (Rahṭ) is used for a group. Here each of the nine persons is called Rahṭ presumably because they were regarded superior among their clan for having wealth and dignity. Each one of them had his own separate group of people, hence they are called nine groups. They were known as the chiefs of *Ḥijr*, which was a city of the people of Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام. Ḥijr was a well-known city of Syria.

لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهٗ وَاَهْلَهٗ ثُمَّ لَنَقُوْلَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهٖ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ اَهْلِهٖ وَاِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ

We shall attack him (Saliḥ) and his family at night, then will say to his heir, We did not witness the destruction of his family and we are really truthful - 27:49.

The plan was that all of them together should attack him and his companions in the darkness of night, and kill them all. And when the claimant of the blood would make the claim, they would say that they did

not kill him, and also they did not know who had killed him. In saying so they would have uttered the truth because no one could have known who had killed whom in the darkness of the night.

The point to note here is that all the acts of infidelity, disbelief, killing and pillage were being performed by the infidels, rather than those among them who were hardened criminals. Yet they were careful that they don't speak a lie or get blamed for falsehood. This shows how great the sin of falsehood is, that even the perpetrators of heinous crimes avoid it for the sake of their self-respect.

The other thing worth noting in this verse is that the one whom these infidels had mentioned as the Walī or heir of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام was a man of his own family. So, why did they leave him out from being assassinated? The answer to this question is that he might have been the successor from the lineage point of view, but otherwise he could be an infidel and be a party with the infidels. There could have been the consideration that he might claim the compensation for the blood of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام because of his relationship with him. The other possibility is that he might have been a Muslim but enjoyed a prominent position and hence there could have been the risk of uprising and reprisal among the people. Only Allah knows best.

Verses 54 - 59

وَلُوْطًا اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَاَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اَئِنَّكُمْ
لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِ النِّسَآءِ ؕ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُوْنَ
﴿٥٥﴾ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَخْرِجُوْٓا اٰلَ لُوْطٍ مِّنْ
قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ اُنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ اَهْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ؗ
قَدَّرْنٰهَا مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ
الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَسَلٰمٌ عَلٰى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفٰى ؕ
آٰللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ اَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

And (We sent) Lūṭ when he said to his people, "Do you

commit the shameful act while you can see (its shamelessness)? [54] **Is it that you really come to men lustfully instead of women? No, you are a people committing acts of ignorance."** [55] **So, the answer of his people was not but that they said, "Expel the family of Lūṭ from your town. They are a people who over-indulge in purity."** [56] **So We saved him and his family, except his wife. We destined her to remain among those who stayed behind.** [57] **And We rained on them a rain. So evil was the rain of those who were warned.** [58]

Say, "Praise belongs to Allah, and peace be on those of His slaves whom He has chosen." Is Allah better or that which they associate (with Him as His partners)? [59]

Commentary

This incident has been related at many places in the Qur'ān, especially in Sūrah Al-A'rāf, where its necessary details have been discussed and may be consulted if required.

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ (Say,"Praise belongs to Allah - 27:59). After describing some events of the prophets and earlier people, and the episodes of torments they faced, this sentence is addressed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that he should express his gratitude to Allah Ta'ālā, for his followers have been exempted from the punishment in this world. He ﷺ is further asked to say *salām* to the earlier prophets and God-fearing persons. Majority of the commentators have adopted this explanation, but some feel that this sentence is also addressed to Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام.

It appears that the expression الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفٰى (His slaves whom He has chosen - 27:59) is used in this verse for the prophets, like in another verse *salām* has been addressed to the prophets, وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ (And *salām* is on the messengers - 37:181). But Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه is of the opinion that it refers to the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This explanation is also adopted by Sufyān Ath-Thaurī. (Ibn Jarīr)

If the explanation of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه is adopted and the meaning of الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفٰى - 27:59 is taken for the companions, then there will be a case for saying "*'Alaihis Salām*" to non-prophets also. This subject will be discussed in detail *Inshallah* under Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb for the verse

صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا (33:56).

Ruling

This verse also teaches the formalities of an address, a sermon or a lecture, that it should start with the praise of Allah and the *ṣalāh (durood)* and *salām* to the prophets. This had always been the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his addresses. His companions also adopted the same practice by commencing not only their addresses but also all the important jobs by praising Allah Ta'ālā and then *ṣalāh* and *salām* on the Holy Prophet ﷺ. (Rūḥ).

Verses 60 - 64

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهٖ حَدَآئِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ ۚ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنْبِتُوْا شَجَرَهَا ۗ ءَ إِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَّعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّجَعَلَ خِلٰلَهَآ أَنْهٰرًا وَّجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ۗ ءَ إِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ أَمَّنْ يُّجِيْبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوْٓءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ ءَ إِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ۗ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَمَّنْ يَّهْدِيْكُمْ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُّرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًا ۢ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۗ ءَ إِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ۗ تَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ أَمَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَمَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ ءَ إِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ۗ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Or the One who created the heavens and the earth and sent down for you water from the sky? Then We caused to grow with it gardens, full of glamor. It was not within your ability to grow their trees. Is there any god alongwith Allah? No, but they are a people who equate (others with Allah). [60]

Or the One who made the earth a place to settle and made rivers amidst it and made mountains for (making) it (firm), and made a barrier between two seas. Is there any god alongwith Allah? No, but most of them do not have knowledge. [61] **Or the One who responds to a helpless person when He prays to Him and removes distress, and who makes you vicegerents of the earth. Is there any god alongwith Allah? No, but little you take lesson.** [62] **Or the One who guides you in depths of darkness on land and sea, and who sends the winds bearing good news before His mercy? Is there any god alongwith Allah? Allah is far higher than the *shirk* they commit.** [63] **Or the One who originated creation, then will reproduce it, and who gives you provision from the sky and the earth? Is there any god alongwith Allah? Say, "Bring your proof if you are true."** [64]

Commentary

أَمَّنْ يُّجِيْبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوْٓءَ

(Or the One who responds to a helpless when he prays to Him and removes distress - 27:62)

Word الْمُضْطَرّ (*Muḍṭar*) is derived from إِضْطِرَار (*Iḍṭirār*), which means to be helpless and restless under some necessity, and that happens when someone does not have any support and friends. Hence, *Muḍṭar* is that person who has lost all hopes from everyone and has turned to Allah as the sole redresser of his woes. This explanation of *Muḍṭar* is adopted by Suddī, Dhun-nūn Al-Miṣrī, Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh etc. (Qurṭubī). The Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised that such a person should supplicate in the following manner.

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ اَرْجُوْا، فَلَا تَكِلْنِيْٓ اِلٰى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ، وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ شَاْنِيْ كُلَّهٗ، لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ

'O Allah, I am an aspirant of your grace. So, please do not leave me at the mercy of myself for a moment, and set right all my matters on Your own. There is no god except You'. (Qurṭubī)

Supplication of a *Muḍṭar* is surely accepted because of its sincerity

Imām Qurṭubī has said that Allah Ta'ālā has taken upon Himself to accept the supplication of a *Muḍṭar*. He has made declaration to this

effect in this verse. The main reason for it is that by divorcing all mundane supports and connections, beseeching from Allah, while regarding Him as the sole redresser is the sincerity at its best. Sincerity has a special position before Allah Ta'ālā. Whoever evinces sincerity, no matter if he is a believer or an infidel, a pious or a sinner, because of the auspiciousness of sincerity the divine favour gets attentive towards him. Allah Ta'ālā Himself elaborates this point while describing the traits of the infidels. He has said that when they are in water and the boat is caught in storm, and they are sure of their death, they call out to Allah with all sincerity, saying that they would be thankful to Him forever if He would save their lives. But when Allah Ta'ālā rescues them and brings them to land by accepting their supplication, they again indulge in associating Him with gods دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ (الى قوله) فَلَمَّا نَجّٰهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ.

A Ṣaḥīḥ *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ says that 'Three supplications are surely accepted, in which there is no room for doubt. One, from an oppressed person, two, by a traveler, and three, from a father against his children'. After citing this *ḥadīth*, Qurṭubī has commented that in all these three cases the situation is the same as the supplication of a *Muḍṭar*, because when an oppressed person calls Allah after having been frustrated from mundane support and help, his condition is no different than that of a *Muḍṭar*. Similarly, a traveler is away from his dear ones, hence helpless, while in journey. Likewise, a father cannot plead for something against his children because of his paternal love and affection for them, unless he is totally dejected and heart-broken, and calls Allah to save himself from the misery of sufferings. 'Ajurrī, a scholar of *ḥadīth,* has quoted on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr رضی اللہ عنہ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'Allah Ta'ālā has pronounced that He shall never reject an appeal from an oppressed person, even if it is made by an infidel'. (Qurṭubī) If a *Muḍṭar* or an oppressed person or a traveler has a feeling that his appeal to Allah has not been accepted, he should not be dejected and be skeptical, because sometimes the request is accepted but its manifestation is delayed due to some expediency and divine wisdom. As an alternative, such a person should search his soul to find out if there was any deficiency in his sincerity or concentration while praying to Allah Ta'ālā. (Only Allah knows best)

Verses 65 - 75

قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ وَ
مَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ ادّٰرَكَ عِلْمُهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۫ بَلْ
هُمْ فِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهَا ۫ بَلْ هُمْ مِّنْهَا عَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا
ءَاِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا وَّاٰبَآؤُنَآ اَئِنَّا لَمُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا هٰذَا نَحْنُ
وَاٰبَآؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِى
الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِىْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا
الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ رَدِفَ لَكُمْ
بَعْضُ الَّذِىْ تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْفَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ
صُدُوْرُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَمَا مِنْ غَآئِبَةٍ فِى السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا
فِىْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٧٥﴾

Say, "No one in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the Unseen except Allah." And they do not know when they will be raised again. [65] **Rather, their knowledge failed in the matter of Hereafter. Rather, they are in doubt about it. Rather, they are blind to it.** [66] **And said those who disbelieved, "Is it, when we and our fathers become dust, shall we really be brought forth?** [67] **Indeed, it was promised to us and to our fathers before. This is nothing but the tales of the ancients."** [68] **Say, "Travel in the land and see how was the fate of the sinners.** [69] **And do not grieve for them and do not be straitened because of what they plan.** [70]

And they say, "When shall this promise come (to pass) if you are true?" [71] **Say, "It is not unlikely that some part of that (punishment) which you seek to come soon is already following you closely."** [72] **And surely, your**

Lord is graceful for the mankind, but most of the people are not grateful. [73] **And surely your Lord knows for sure what their hearts conceal and what they reveal.** [74] **And there is nothing hidden in the heavens and the earth that is not (recorded) in a manifest book.** [75]

Commentary

قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ

Say, "No one in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of Unseen except Allah." - 27:65

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was instructed to tell people that all the creatures that live in the heavens, like angels, and all the creatures that live in this world, like humans and jinns, none of them have any knowledge of the unseen *(ghayb)* except Allah. In the above-referred verse it has been stated very clearly that it is an exclusive attribute of Allah Ta'ālā, and no one else, not even an angel or a prophet, could share this attribute. This subject has been dealt with in detail under verse No. 59 of Sūrah al-An'ām on page No.360 in the 3rd volume. In addition to that, I have written a separate treatise on the subject under the title (كشف الريب عن علم الغيب) which has been published in my book Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān in arabic. Those who are interested in this subject can refer to that.

بَلِ ادّٰرَكَ عِلْمُهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ فِى شَكٍّ مِّنْهَا ۚ بَلْ هُمْ مِّنْهَا عَمُوْنَ

Rather, their knowledge failed in the matter of Hereafter. Rather, they are in doubt about it. Rather, they are blind to it. 27:66.

There are different recitations for the word اِدّٰرَكَ *(iddāraka)* and their meanings are also different. Those who are interested should refer to different commentaries for the details. It is enough to understand here that some commentators have taken it to mean "completion" and have explained the verse thus: "Their knowledge and understanding will be completed in the Hereafter", because then the truth about every thing shall be laid bare. But knowledge of truth at that time will be of no avail, because they had been contradicting the Hereafter in the world. But some other commentators have taken the word in the meaning of 'having failed' and 'having been lost'. The sense in this case would be that their knowledge about the Hereafter was lost, and they could not understand

what it was.

Verses 76 - 79

إِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَقُصُّ عَلٰى بَنِىٓ إِسْرَآءِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِى هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِى بَيْنَهُمْ بِحُكْمِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۖ إِنَّكَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٧٩﴾

Surely this Qur'ān mentions to the children of Isrā'īl most of the matters in which they dispute. [76] **And it is guidance and mercy for the believers.** [77] **And surely your Lord will decide between them by His judgment, and He is the All-Mighty, All-Knowing.** [78] **So trust in Allah. Surely you are on the open truth.** [79]

Commentary

By describing Allah's omnipotence through different examples in the earlier verses, the reality of the Hereafter and the rational possibility of resurrection of the dead has been established. There is no logical ambiguity in that. Its definite occurrence is confirmed by the sayings of the prophets and the divine books that were revealed to them. Authenticity and establishment of any information is based on the veracity of the courier or the narrator. In this verse it is stated that the informant of this news is the Holy Qur'ān whose authenticity and truthfulness is beyond any doubt or contradiction. So much so that in matters in which the scholars of Banī Isrā'īl had differed strongly and could not resolve them, the Qur'ān has given them evaluated verdict to follow for correct judgment. It is but obvious that in matters where there is difference of opinion among the scholars, the only competent authority to overrule is the one who is superior in knowledge and status. Therefore, it is established that Qur'ān is an authentic informant. After this the Holy Prophet ﷺ was consoled that he need not be despondent over their antagonism. 'Allah Ta'ālā is to make judgment Himself in his case. He should have faith in Allah, because Allah's help and aid is with the truth. And there is no doubt that he is on the right path'. (Verse 79).

Verses 80 - 81

إِنَّكَ لَاتُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَمَآ أَنْتَ بِهٰدِى الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ۚ إِنْ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾

Surely, you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear your call when they turn their backs in retreat, [80] **nor can you show the right path to the blind ones against their wandering astray. You can make no one listen (to you) except those who believe in Our verses, then submit themselves (to Allah).** [81]

Commentary

It was the demand of love and affection the Holy Prophet ﷺ had for all human beings that he should save them all from the fire of *jahannam* by making them accept the message of Allah. It used to hurt him a lot if someone did not accept it. He used to feel as if someone's children were proceeding toward the fire by not heeding to the advice of his parents. Therefore, Qur'ān has adopted different expressions to console him at many places. One such advice was contained in the sentence وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِىْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ (And do not grieve for them,and do not be straitened because of what they plan - 27:70) which has appeared in the earlier verse. In the above verse he has been consoled in a slightly different manner, that his job was only to convey the message of truth, which he had done admirably. If someone had not accepted this, it was not his fault or deficiency. So, he need not worry and be despondent. Rather it is their own fault that they have lost their sense of direction. Qur'ān has described the loss of their sense of direction by presenting three examples. First, that they were like dead bodies in the matter of acceptance of truth, and thus cannot take any one's advice to their advantage. Second, that they were like the deaf man who does not wish to hear anything, rather they turn their back and go away if someone tries to give them any advice. Third, that they were like the blind that cannot see even if someone tries to show them the path. After providing these three examples it is said:

إِنْ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ

You can make no one listen (to you) except those who believe in Our verses, then submit themselves (to Allah). 27:81.

It is very clear that in the subject under discussion it is not purported to make the voice reach the listener, but what is intended here is that what is conveyed should be beneficial to the addressee. The Qur'ān has defined the audition as non-audition if it is not beneficial from the objective point of view. This point is elaborated at the end of the verse where it is stated that you can cause to hear only those who are willing to believe. Should it mean to make them hear only, then the statement of the Qur'ān would have been contrary to facts and observations, because there are many undeniable proofs that divine message was conveyed to the disbelievers, which they not only listened but also answered to reject. It is therefore, quite clear that here causing to hear means the understanding which is beneficial. Then by calling them as dead bodies, it is further emphasized that you cannot make them realize the truth, because even if the dead could hear and wish to accept the truth, it would not be to their avail. The dead have passed through the worldly life, where faith and good deeds did matter. After the death, both in Barzakh and the Hereafter, all infidels and disbelievers would wish for faith and righteous deeds, but then it would be too late. This statement of the verse does not bear out that the dead cannot hear. In fact this verse is silent on the subject of hearing by the dead. This subject needs separate study which follows:

Can the dead persons hear?

The issue, whether the dead can hear or not, was one of the subjects on which the exalted companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ had different points of view. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه has declared the hearing of the dead as established, but Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها has negated this understanding. Because of this difference of opinion there are two groups among the companions and the *tabi'īn* (generation next to them). Some believe that the dead do hear, while others deny it. This subject is mentioned in the Qur'ān at three places. One is the same as referred above in Sūrah An-Naml. The other is in Sūrah Ar-Rūm with almost similar wordings, and in Sūrah Al-Fāṭir it has appeared with these words وَمَا اَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِى الْقُبُوْرِ, that is, 'You cannot cause those who are in

the graves to hear'. It is worth noting in all the three verses that none of them has declared that the dead cannot hear. The expression used in each one of the three verses is that 'you cannot cause them to hear'. The consistent expression used in all the three verses seems to be a clear indication that the dead may have the ability to hear but we cannot cause them to listen to us.

As against these three verses, another verse relating to martyrs reveals that they are bestowed with a special type of life in their graves. In this special life they also get food and are conveyed good tidings from Allah Ta'ālā about their dear ones . The verse reads as:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِم مِّنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

> And never take those killed in the way of Allah as dead. Rather they are alive, with their Lord, well-provided, happy with what Allah has given them of His grace;and they feel pleased with the good news,about those who after them could not join them, that there shall be no fear for them, nor shall they grieve. (3:169-170)

This verse corroborates that even after death some intellect and perception may be left behind in the human spirit. Rather in the case of martyrs there is a hint that such a thing does happen. As for the argument that this position relates only to the martyrs, to whom the verse refers, and not to the ordinary dead, its answer is that at least it tells that after death some intellect and perception and understanding of the world may be left behind in the human spirit. The way Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed upon martyrs the honour of maintaining the connection of their spirits with their bodies and graves, He can also grace the other dead with the same ability. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, holds the view that dead do hear. This view is based on a Ṣaḥīḥ *ḥadīth*, which is reported by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ﷺ .It is as follows:

ما من احد يمر بقبر اخيه المسلم كان يعرفه فى الدّنيا فيسلّم عليه الاّ ردّ اللّٰه عليه روحه حتى يرد عليه السّلام (ذكره ابن كثير فى تفسيره مصححا عن ابن عمرؓ)

> 'When a person passes by the grave of a Muslim brother whom he knew when he was alive and he offers *salām* to him, Allah Tal'ālā returns his spirit into his body, so that he may return

the *salām*'. (Ibn Kathīr, declaring it as Ṣaḥīḥ)

This also proves that when a person visits the grave of a Muslim brother and offers him his *salām*, the dead listens to his *salām* and answers back. It happens like this that Allah Ta'ālā returns the spirit of the dead back to this world momentarily. It confirms two points. One, that dead can hear, and second, that their hearing and our causing them to hear is not in our control, but is dependent entirely on Allah's will. Whenever He wills, they can hear and whenever He does not will, they do not hear. The above-referred *ḥadīth* has made it clear that Allah Ta'ālā is gracious to let the dead hear the *salām* of a Muslim brother, and also grants him privilege to answer back. But for any other situation or utterance it is not known whether the dead can hear or not. The research carried out by Imām Ghazzāli and Allāmah Subki also corroborates that it is established by this Qur'ānic verse and Ṣaḥīḥ *āḥādīth* that under certain conditions the dead do hear the utterance of the living, but it is not known whether every dead person hears the utterance at all times of all those who are living. This also makes the Qur'ānic verse and narrations on the subject comparable. It is quite possible that the dead could hear the utterance of the living at certain times and could not hear at others. This is also possible that they may hear the utterance of some and do not hear of others. Yet there is another possibility that some dead could hear and others could not. It is also established by the verses of Sūrahs An-Naml, Ar-Rūm and Fāṭir that it is not under the control of human beings to cause the dead to hear; rather it rests with Allah alone to make them hear whenever He wills. Therefore, where it is established by the *Ṣaḥīḥ āḥādīth* that the dead did hear, we should believe it; and where it is not established, both the situations are possible . Hence, we should neither accept nor deny it. For further details of the subject,my treatise on the subject may be consulted. This treatise is in Arabic and is included in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān.

Verse 82

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

And when the word will come to fall upon them, We will bring forth for them a beast from the earth who will speak to them that the human beings (i.e the infidels) did not believe in Our verses. [82]

Commentary

The nature of the beast coming out of the earth, and its time and place

It is reported in Musnād of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the Doomsday would not come until you witness ten signs of it. They are:

(1) Appearance of the sun from the west.
(2) Dukhān (Smoke).
(3) Dābba-tul-arḍ, i.e the beast coming out of the earth
(4) Coming out of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj.
(5) Descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā ﷺ.
(6) Dajjāl.

7, 8, 9) Three lunar eclipses together – one in the west, second in the east and the third in the peninsula of Arabia.

10) A fire, that will emerge from the Gulf of Aden and drive every one towards the plain of *maḥshar;* wherever people will stop for the rest at night, the fire will also stop there, and will drive them again the next day. (Muslim, Tirmidhī)

This *ḥadīth* has informed us of the emergence of such an animal close to Doomsday that will talk to human beings. The *Tanvīn* of the word *Dābbah* indicates that this animal will be extra-ordinary. This animal will not be born by the normal way of propagation; instead, it will emerge from the ground all of a sudden. There is an allusion in this *ḥadīth* that the emergence of this animal would be one of the very last signs, after which the Doomsday will follow soon. Ibn Kathīr has reported in a lengthy *ḥadīth* on the authority of Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ibn 'Umar ﷺ through Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālisī that this beast will emerge in Makkah from the mount of *Ṣafā,* and after cleaning the dust from its head will reach at a point between the Black Stone (Al-Ḥajar-al-Aswad) and the Station of Ibrāhīm (Maqām Ibrāhīm). Seeing this creature , people will start running helter-skelter. Only one group of people will stay behind. Then

the beast will make their faces glitter like stars. After that it will go out in the world, and put a sign of infidelity on the face of every infidel. No one will be able to get out of its grasp. It will recognize every believer and the infidel (Ibn Kathīr). And Muslim Ibn Ḥajjāj has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that he had heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, which he did not forget, that among the last signs of the Doomsday the first would be the rising of the sun from the west, and after that *Dābbah* would come out. Out of the two signs whichever appears first, the Doomsday will follow soon. (Ibn Kathīr)

Shaikh Jalaluddin Maḥallī رحمه الله تعالى has said that after the appearance of *Dābbah* the obligation of inviting others to good deeds and forbidding them from the evils will cease to apply, and no infidel would convert to Islam after that. This statement is inferred from many *āḥādīth* and the statements of Ṣaḥābah. (Maẓharī). Ibn Kathīr has related many a things about the appearance and activities of *Dābbah*, most of which are not trustworthy. Therefore, only that much should be trusted and believed which is contained in the Qur'ān and authentic āḥādīth. Anything beyond that should be discarded, as it is neither of any value nor benefit.

As for the question as to what this *Dābbah* will converse with people, some commentators are of the view that it will communicate what is stated in the Qur'ān, that is أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا لَايُوْقِنُوْنَ (that the human beings did not believe in Our verses). It will communicate the message on behalf of Allah Ta'ālā that 'Many did not believe Our verses before this'. It would mean that now the time has come that every one would believe, but then it would be too late, because it would not be acceptable then. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Qatādah رحمهم الله تعالى, have reported, which is corroborated by a narration of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ also, that the *Dābbah* will converse with people normally, as people do among themselves (Ibn Kathīr).

Verses 83 - 90

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِّمَّنْ يُّكَذِّبُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿۸۳﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءُوْ قَالَ اَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِاٰيٰتِىْ وَلَمْ تُحِيْطُوْا بِهَا عِلْمًا اَمَّا

ذَاكُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَوَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمَا ظَلَمُوْا فَهُمْ
لَا يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ لِيَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ
مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي
الصُّوْرِ فَفَزِعَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ ۭ
وَكُلٌّ اَتَوْهُ دٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَّهِيَ تَمُرُّ
مَرَّ السَّحَابِ ۭ صُنْعَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۭ اِنَّهٗ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا
تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ مَنْ جَاۗءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا ۚ وَهُمْ مِّنْ فَزَعٍ
يَّوْمَىِٕذٍ اٰمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَمَنْ جَاۗءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ ۭ
هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾

And (remember) the day when We will gather from every nation a host of those who used to belie Our verses, and they will be kept under control. [83] **Until when they will come, He (Allah) will say, "Did you belie My verses while you did not comprehend them with knowledge, or what was it that you used to do?** [84] **And the Word will come to fall on them because of their transgression, so they will not (be able to) speak.** [85]

Did they not see that We made the night, so that they may have rest in it, and (made) the day to make them see? Surely, in this there are signs for a people who believe. [86] **And (remember) the day when the Horn will be blown; so all those in the heavens and the earth will be in panic, except such as Allah wills. And All (of them) will come to Him in humility.** [87] **And you see the mountains (at present) taking them as fixed, while they will fly like the flight of clouds - an act of Allah who has perfected every thing. Surely, He is All-Aware of what you do.** [88]

Whoever will come with the good deed will have (a reward) better than that, and such people will be immune on that day from any panic. [89] **And whoever will come with evil deed, the faces of such people will**

be thrown down into the Fire. You will not be recompensed but for what you used to do. [90]

Commentary

فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ (and they will be kept under control - 27:83). The word used here is derived from *Waz'*, which means to stop. The sense here is that the people in front will be stopped, so that those left behind could catch up. Some have taken the word *Waz'* in the sense of 'pushing'. Hence, it would mean that they would be pushed while being brought to their stand.

وَلَمْ تُحِيطُوا بِهَا عِلْمًا (while you did not comprehend them with knowledge - 27:84). There is an allusion in this verse that falsifying the message of Allah Ta'ālā is by itself a great sin, especially when one falsifies it without giving any consideration or thought, then the crime is doubled. This has brought to light that if an issue or subject is duly considered and thought over, and yet one could not get to the truth, in that situation the intensity of the crime is reduced. Nevertheless, the denial of the existence of Allah and His Oneness would not save any one from infidelity and adoption of the wrong path, and would thus lead to perpetual torment. It is because they are such self-evident matters that any mistake of judgment is not allowed in them.

وَيَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ (And [remember] the day when the Horn will be blown; so all those in the heavens and the earth will be in panic - 27:87). The word فَزَع *'faza'* means being nervous or perplexed. In another verse on the same subject the word فَزِع *Fazi'a* is substituted by صَعِق *Ṣa'iqa* which means losing consciousness. If both these verses are taken to refer to the first blowing of the Ṣūr (the Horn) then the total sum of the two words would be that, at the time of the blowing of the Ṣūr, every one will get nervous and perplexed initially, and then will lose consciousness, and ultimately will die. Qatādah and some other Imāms of *tafsīr* have taken this verse for the second blowing of the Ṣūr, when all the dead will resurrect. Thus the meaning of the verse would be that all the dead would get up perplexed. Some have interpreted that Ṣūr will be blown thrice. On the first blowing, every one will get nervous and perplexed, which is called 'the blowing of فَزَع *faza'*. On the second blowing every one will die, which is 'the blowing of صَعَق Ṣa'aq. The third blowing will be the blowing for the resurrection, on which all dead will get up. But only two blowings are mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ṣaḥīḥ *āḥādīth*.

(Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Ibn Mubarak has quoted Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالىٰ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that there will be a forty years gap in between the two blowings. (Qurṭubī)

إِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ (except such as Allah wills - 27:87). This exception is from *Faza'*, which means panic and perplexity. The sense is that there will be people who will not be nervous at all at the time of resurrection. There is a *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that these people would be the martyrs. At the time of second life on resurrection they will not get nervous. (This is a Ṣaḥīḥ *ḥadīth* according to Ibn al-'Arabī – Qurṭubī). Sayyidnā Sa'īd ibn Jubair ﷺ has also said that the exception applies to the martyrs, who will assemble around the 'Arsh wearing their swords. Quashirī has observed that prophets are the very first included among them, because they have the status of martyrs also, and their position as prophet is still higher. (Qurṭubī)

The following verse will appear later in Sūrah Az-Zumar:

وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ

For the Trumpet shall be blown and whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth shall swoon, save whom Allah wills - 39:68.

This verse tells us that when the Horn will be blown, all those in the heavens and the earth will get unconscious, and then die. Here also an exception is made, which according to one *ḥadīth* is meant for six angels, namely Jibra'īl, Mīk'āil, Isrāfīl, Malakul-Maut and Ḥamalatul- 'Arsh, who will not die by the blow of Ṣūr. Later, they will also die, as explained in the *ḥadīth*. Those who have held that *Faza'* and *Sa'aq* both relate to the same blowing, they have taken the exception, here as well, for the special angels, like Sūrah Az-Zumar. But those who have held that *Faza'* and *Ṣa'aq* relate to two different blowings, they interpret the exception in the present verse as referring to the martyrs, as explained above.

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَّهِىَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

And you see the mountains (at present) taking them as fixed, while they will fly like the flight of clouds - 27:88

The word تَرَى "*tarā*" in the beginning of this verse is used in Arabic for both present and future tense. Therefore, it can be translated as "You see"

or as "You will see". In the latter case, the verse would be referring to the mountains as they will appear on the Doomsday. The sense in that case will be that the mountains will be uprooted and blown like clouds, which though would appear stationary to the onlookers, but in reality will actually move swiftly. When huge bodies, whose beginning and end is not visible to the eyes, move in any direction, one does not perceive their movement, no matter how swiftly they move. They look like stationary objects, although they are moving. One could experience this while looking at a mass of cloud hanging overhead. One discovers their movement only when they move out so far away that a part of the sky is left bare towards the horizon. Based on this principle, the verse means that the mountains will seem, on the Doomsday, as if they are fixed, but it will be an illusion for an onlooker, because in reality they will be moving. Most of the commentators have interpreted this verse in this manner. The other interpretation is based on regarding the word "*tarā*" as a verb in the present tense and translating it as,"You see" instead of "You will see". In this case, the verse is referring to the present state of the mountains, as they look stationary, and an ordinary onlooker thinks that they will remain fixed forever and will never move from their place, but on the Doomsday they will be floating like clouds. This interpretation is adopted by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi (and on that basis the verse is translated above as "You see")

Some scholars have pointed out that different conditions are described in the Qur'ān about mountains on the Doomsday. The first condition is that of إِندكاك Indkak and earthquake, which will envelop all the mountains of the world إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا (When the earth is ground to powder-89:21) or إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا (When the earth is shaken with a mighty shaking - 99:1). The second condition is that their big rocks will become like carded wool وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوْشِ (And the mountains shall be like plucked wool-tufts - 101:5). This will happen at the time when the sky will become like molten copper. Mountain rocks will go up like carded wool, and the skies will come down and meet them in the middle يَوْمَ تَكُوْنُ السَّمَآءُ كَالْمُهْلِ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ (Upon the day when heaven shall be as molten copper and the mountains shall be as plucked wool-tufts - 70:8-9). In the third condition the carded wool will no more remain a homogeneous body like rocks, but will turn into very fine particles وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا فَكَانَتْ هَبَآءً مُّنبَثًّا

(and the mountains crumbled and become a dust scattered - 56:5-6). In the fourth condition, the fine particles of mountain rocks will get dispersed فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّىْ نَسْفًا (So, you say, "My Lord will blow them up totally (as dust) - 20:105). In the fifth condition, the fine particles of mountain rocks, which will engulf the land like cloud of dust will be driven up by the winds. This cloud of dust will cover up the whole world, and will appear stationary, although there will be swift movement in it like clouds تَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ (And you see the mountains (at present) taking them as fixed, while they will fly like the flight of clouds - 27:88). Some of these conditions will take place at the first blowing of the Ṣūr, and some after the second blowing, when the world will be made absolutely flat plain. There will be no caves or mountains left in the world, nor will there be any building or tree فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّىْ نَسْفًا فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا لَّاتَرٰى فِيْهَا عِوَجًا وَّلَآ اَمْتًا (20:105-107). (Qurṭubī, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

صُنْعَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِىْٓ اَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ

An act of Allah who has perfected every thing. - 27:88

Sun' means skillful act, and *'itqān'* means to make perfect and firm. Apparently this sentence is related to all the preceding subjects wherein Allah Ta'ālā's omnipotence and marvelous creations are described, where the alteration of day and night is mentioned, and the blowing of Ṣūr and resulting conditions of the Doomsday are related. It is to emphasize that all these situations should not amaze and astonish any one, because their Creator is not a man or an angel having limited knowledge and power, but the Lord of all the worlds. But if this sentence is read as referring only to the adjacent preceding sentence تَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً (And you see the mountains (at present) taking them as fixed - 27:88) then it would mean that the phenomenon about the mountains, that they look stationary, whereas in reality they are moving, is not something astonishing, because all these happenings are not beyond the power of Allah Ta'ālā, who is All-Powerful.

مَنْ جَآءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا

"Whoever will come with the good deed will have (a reward) better than that" - 27:89

This description relates to the situation that will take place after the

Doomsday and the account taking. Here the word *ḥasanaḥ* is purported for the *kalīmah* of لا اله إلاّ الله محمد رسول الله (as explained by Ibrāhīm) or it is an expression of sincerity (as interpreted by Qatādah). Some have interpreted this to include complete submission. The sense is that every good deed will be recompensed by a reward better than the deed; but it should be remembered that a person's righteous acts could be considered as righteous only when he fulfills its first condition of having faith in Allah Ta'ālā. Then he would get an award better than commensurable to his good deeds. It means that he would be graced with eternal bounties of the Paradise, and would escape from all troubles and torments for good. Some have interpreted that the word "better" means here that the reward of one good deed would be awarded from ten times to seven hundred times more. (Maẓharī)

وَهُمْ مِّنْ فَزَعٍ يَّوْمَئِذٍ اٰمِنُوْنَ

and such people will be immune on that day from any panic - 27:89.

Word *Faza'* is purported here for any big calamity or perplexity. Thus the meaning of the sentence is that, while living in this world, every pious person is scared of his fate in the Hereafter, and as a matter of fact, he should be scared in the light of Qur'ānic verse إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُوْنٍ (70:28). The torment of Allah is not something to be forgotten and set aside. It is for this reason that even the prophets, the companions, and saints were always frightened and daunted. But after the account taking on Doomsday those who would bring the *ḥasanah* (the good deed contemplated in this verse) with them would be free from all fear and grief, and will live forever in complete tranquility. (Only Allah knows best)

Verses 91 - 93

إِنَّمَآ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هٰذِهِ الْبَلْدَةِ الَّذِیْ حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهٗ كُلُّ شَیْءٍ وَّأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِیْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَنْ أَتْلُوَا الْقُرْاٰنَ ۚ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰی فَإِنَّمَا یَهْتَدِیْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِیْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ سَیُرِیْكُمْ اٰیٰتِهٖ فَتَعْرِفُوْنَهَا ۗ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾

I am but ordered to worship the Lord of this city which is sanctified by Him. And to Him belongs every thing, and I am ordered to be one of the Muslims (who submit themselves to Allah), [91] **and to recite the Qur'ān; so whoever takes the right path, takes it for his own benefit. As for the one who goes astray, say (to him), "I am only one of the warners."** [92] **And say, "Praise belongs to Allah. He will show you His sign, then you will recognize them." And your Lord is not unaware of what you do.** [93]

Commentary

رَبَّ هٰذِهِ الْبَلْدَةِ (the Lord of this city - 27:91). Majority of the commentators have taken the word بَلْدَة "Baldah" (the city) for Makkah. Allah Ta'ālā is the Lord of all the worlds and the Lord of heavens and earth. Therefore, the particular mention of Makkah here is to show its revered splendor, and its respect and honour in the sight of Allah Ta'ālā. Word Ḥaram is derived from Taḥrīm, which means "to prohibit" and also means "complete respect and veneration", and because of this respect and veneration whatever special religious prohibitions are applicable to Makkah and its surrounding land are also included in it. For instance, whoever takes refuge in Ḥaram is secured. It is not allowed to kill or take revenge from any one in the Ḥaram. Even hunting of animals and cutting of trees is not permitted in the precincts of Ḥaram. These restrictions are enjoined in the verse وَمَنْ دَخَلَهٗ كَانَ اٰمِنًا (and whoever enters there is secure - 3:97), while some of them have appeared in the beginning of Sūrah Mā'idah. In addition, verse لَاتَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَاَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ (do not kill game when, you are in Iḥrām - 5:95) also includes this subject.

(الحمد لله Today on Shawwal 24, 1391 Hijrah the commentary of Sūrah An-Naml is complete. The Indian army has unleashed full-scale war against Pakistan since Shawwal 14, and its aeroplanes are pounding Karachi heavily. Bombs are being dropped regularly every night on civil population as well. There is a complete blackout at nights. The houses get jolted with the explosion of the bombs. But by the grace of Allah there was no break in the writing of this commentary. During the last ten days of war twenty pages of the commentary were written.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naml
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ

(The Stories)

Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ was revealed in Makkah and contains 88 verses and 9 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 to 13

طٰسٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ نَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَّبَاِ
مُوْسٰى وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِى
الْاَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ اَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَّسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ اَبْنَآءَ هُمْ
وَيَسْتَحْيٖ نِسَآءَ هُمْ ط اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَنُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّمُنَّ
عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ اَئِمَّةً وَّ نَجْعَلَهُمُ
الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنُرِىَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ
وَجُنُوْدَ هُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰٓى اُمِّ مُوْسٰٓى
اَنْ اَرْضِعِيْهِ فَاِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَاَلْقِيْهِ فِى الْيَمِّ وَ لَا تَخَافِىْ وَلَا تَحْزَنِىْ ج
اِنَّا رَآدُّوْهُ اِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ فَالْتَقَطَهٗٓ اٰلُ فِرْعَوْنَ
لِيَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَّحَزَنًا ط اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ هَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَ هُمَا كَانُوْا
خٰطِئِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَقَالَتِ امْرَاَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتُ عَيْنٍ لِّىْ وَلَكَ ط لَا تَقْتُلُوْهُ صلے ق
عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهٗ وَلَدًا وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَاَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ اُمِّ

مُوْسٰى فٰرِغًا ۭ اِنْ كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِيْ بِهٖ لَوْلَآ اَنْ رَّبَطْنَا عَلٰى قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُوْنَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَقَالَتْ لِاُخْتِهٖ قُصِّيْهِ ۡ فَبَصُرَتْ بِهٖ عَنْ جُنُبٍ
وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَقَالَتْ هَلْ
اَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَّكْفُلُوْنَهٗ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهٗ نٰصِحُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَرَدَدْنٰهُ
اِلٰٓى اُمِّهٖ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ وَلِتَعْلَمَ اَنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّلٰكِنَّ
اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾

Ṭā Sīm Mīm. [1] **These are verses of the clear Book.** [2] **We recite to you a part of the story of Mūsā and the Pharaoh with truth for a people who believe.** [3]

Indeed, the Pharaoh had become high-handed in the land and had divided its people into different groups; he used to persecute a group of them, slaughtering their sons and keeping their women alive. Indeed he was one of the mischief makers. [4] **And We intended to favour those who were held as weak in the land and to make them leaders and make them inheritors (of the land)** [5] **and give them power in the land, and to make the Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies see (that) what they were fearing from (had happened).** [6]

And We inspired the mother of Mūsā saying, "Suckle him (Mūsā). Then once you fear about him, cast him in the river, and do not fear and do not grieve. Surely We are going to bring him back to you and appoint him one of (Our) messengers. [7] **So the family of the Pharaoh picked him up, so that he becomes for them an enemy and a (cause of) grief. Indeed the Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies were mistaken.** [8] **And the wife of the Pharaoh said, (to the Pharaoh about Mūsā), "He may be a delight of eye for me and you. Do not kill him. It is hoped that he will be of benefit to us, or we will adopt him as a son." And they were not aware (of what was going to happen).** [9]

And the heart of the mother of Mūsā became restless; indeed she was about to disclose this (the real facts

about Mūsā), had We not strengthened her heart to remain among those who have firm belief (in Allah's promise). [10] **And she said to his sister, "Keep track of him." So she watched him from a distance while they were not aware.** [11] **And We had already barred him (Mūsā) from (accepting) any suckling women, so she (his sister) said (to the Pharaoh's people), "Shall I point out to you a family who will nurse him for you, and they will be his care-takers?"** [12] **Thus We brought him back to his mother, so that her eye might have comfort and she might not grieve, and so that she might know that Allah's promise is true, but most of them do not know.** [13]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ is the very last among the Makkī Sūrahs. It was revealed between Makkah and Juḥfah (Rābigh) during the migration. It is mentioned in some narrations that during the journey from Makkah to Madīnah when the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached near Juḥfah or Rābigh, Jibra'īl عليه السلام came to him and enquired whether he was feeling home sick, as he was leaving the place where he was born and spent all his life. To this the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied in the affirmative. Then Jibra'īl عليه السلام recited this Sūrah and gave him ﷺ the good tiding that ultimately Makkah will fall to him and come under his ﷺ control. The related verse is as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ

Surely the one who has enjoined the Qur'ān upon you will surely bring you back to the place of return - 28:85

Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ begins with the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, first briefly then in detail. First half of the Sūrah contains Sayyidnā Mūsā's episodes with the Pharaoh, and towards the end of the Sūrah his episode with Qārūn is related.

The story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is related extensively in the Qur'ān, at places briefly while at others in detail. In Sūrah Al-Kahf (Cave) that part of the story is related in which he encountered Al-Khaḍir عليه السلام. Then, in Sūrah Ṭāhā other parts of the story are related in some detail, while some details are related in Sūrah An-Naml. Now, in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ they are being reiterated. In Sūrah Ṭāhā where Allah Ta'ālā has said about

Mūsā عليه السلام فَتَنّٰكَ فُتُوْنًا (And We tested you with a great ordeal - 20:40). Imām Nasā'ī and some other commentators have penned down the entire story at that point. The writer has followed suit, and by quoting Ibn Kathīr has written the whole story under Sūrah Ṭahā. All the relevant parts of the story, it's related important issues, and rulings have been discussed in detail under Sūrahs al-Kahf and Ṭahā. For any reference of an issue or ruling it would be apt to look up there. Now in this Sūrah commentary will be restricted to brief explanation of the wordings of these verses.

وَنُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ اَئِمَّةً (And We intended to favour those who were held as weak in the land and to make them leaders - 28:5). In this verse it is emphasized that the plan of the the Pharaoh was not equal to that of the divine fate, rather it turned out to be completely ineffective and he and his entire courtiers were befooled. On the basis of the dream and it's interpretation about an Isrā'īli boy from whom the life of the Pharaoh was at risk, and because of which hundreds of newly born Isrā'īli male issues were put to death on their birth, it so turned out that Allah Ta'ālā made that very boy to grow up in his own house. Not only that, but for the solace of his mother it was arranged to send him back to her for nursing in a most astonishing manner. On top of that the Pharaoh was made to pay a service charge for nursing, which according to some narrations was one Dīnār a day. Since this service charge was taken from an infidel with his consent, hence there is no confusion about its admissibility. The cruelty he had perpetrated to quell the risk was of no avail to him, because that very danger was ultimately made to rear in his own home, and ultimately erupted like lava. This way the dream came true, and he saw that happening with his own eyes. The verse وَنُرِىَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ (and to make the Pharaoh and Hāmān and their armies see [that] what they were fearing from (had actually happened - 28:6) describes this only.

وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى اُمِّ مُوْسٰى (28:7) The word Waḥy (inspiration) is used here in its literal meaning. It does not mean the Waḥy that is peculiar to prophets. This point has already been explained under Sūrah Ṭahā.

Verses 14 - 21

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَاسْتَوٰٓى اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى

الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۴﴾ وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِيْنَةَ عَلٰى حِيْنِ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ
فِيْهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلٰنِ ۫ هٰذَا مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ وَهٰذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهٖ ۚ فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ
الَّذِيْ مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ عَلَى الَّذِيْ مِنْ عَدُوِّهٖ ۙ فَوَكَزَهٗ مُوْسٰى فَقَضٰى
عَلَيْهِ ۫ قَالَ هٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۱۵﴾ قَالَ
رَبِّ اِنِّيْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِيْ فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ فَغَفَرَ لَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ
﴿۱۶﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ اَكُوْنَ ظَهِيْرًا لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ
﴿۱۷﴾ فَاَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ خَآئِفًا يَّتَرَقَّبُ فَاِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنْصَرَهٗ
بِالْاَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهٗ ؕ قَالَ لَهٗ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۱۸﴾ فَلَمَّآ
اَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّبْطِشَ بِالَّذِيْ هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَّهُمَا ۙ قَالَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى اَتُرِيْدُ اَنْ
تَقْتُلَنِيْ كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا ۢ بِالْاَمْسِ ۖ ۗ اِنْ تُرِيْدُ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ جَبَّارًا فِي
الْاَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيْدُ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِيْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾ وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ
اَقْصَا الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْعٰى ۫ قَالَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنَّ الْمَلَاَ يَاْتَمِرُوْنَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوْكَ
فَاخْرُجْ اِنِّيْ لَكَ مِنَ النّٰصِحِيْنَ ﴿۲۰﴾ فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَآئِفًا يَّتَرَقَّبُ ۫
قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِيْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۲۱﴾ ع

And when he reached his maturity and became perfect, We gave him wisdom and knowledge. And in this manner We reward those who do good. [14] **And he entered the city at a time of unawareness of its people; so he found in it two men fighting each other: This one was from his own group and that one from his enemies. So the one from his own group called him for help against the one who was from his enemies. So Mūsā struck him with his fist and finished him off. (Then) He (Mūsā) said (out of remorse), "This is some of Satan's act. He is indeed a clear enemy who misleads."** [15] **He said, "O my Lord, I have wronged myself, so forgive me." So He forgave him. Indeed He is the most Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [16] **He (Mūsā) said, "O my Lord, since**

You have favoured me, I will never be a supporter of the sinners." [17]

Then next morning he was fearful, waiting (for what comes next) when the man who sought his help the day before, shouted to him for help (again). Mūsā said to him, "You are surely an apparent trouble-maker." [18] **Thereafter when he intended to grasp at the one who was an enemy to both of them, the latter said, "O Mūsā, do you want to kill me as you have killed a person yesterday? You intend nothing but to become a tyrant in the land, and you do not intend to be one of the peace-makers."** [19]

And there came a man running, from the farthest part of the city. He said, "The chiefs are counselling each other about you, so that they kill you. So, leave (the city). I am one of your well-wishers." [20] **So, he went out of it (the city) in a state of fear, waiting (for what comes next). He said, "O my Lord, save me from the cruel people."** [21]

Commentary

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَاسْتَوٰى (And when he reached his maturity and became perfect - 28:14). The literal meaning of *'ashudd* (اَشُدّ) is to attain the peak of strength or intensity. For instance a person gradually develops from the position of juvenile weakness to the strength of adulthood. A time comes when he has attained full strength and vigour that he could achieve. That point in life is called *'ashudd*. In different parts of the world and for different people this point in life varies according to climate, character of the land, race etc. Some people attain it early while others take time. 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid has reported that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and Mujāhid have placed the age of *'ashudd* as 33rd year of one's life. This is called the age of perfection or the age of discernment, when the development of body stops after reaching its peak. After this age a period of hold commences, which lasts until the age of forty. This period is mentioned in the verse as *Istawa* (translated above as became perfect). After the age of forty years the decline and weakness sets in. Hence, it can be said that *'ashudd* (اَشُدّ) of a person starts from the age of 33 years and lasts through 40 years. (Rūḥ, Qurṭubī).

اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا (We gave him wisdom and knowledge - 28:14) The word

(حُكم) *Ḥukm* (translated above as 'wisdom') is used here for prophethood, and the word 'knowledge' refers to the knowledge of divine injunctions.

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِيْنَةَ عَلٰى حِيْنِ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا (And he entered the city at a time of unawareness of its people - 15). Most commentators have interpreted that the word 'city' is used here for the main city of Egypt. The words 'he entered' indicate that Mūsā عليه السلام, had gone away somewhere out of Egypt. Then he entered back at a time when people normally sleep. It is also mentioned in the incident of killing of the 'Qibṭī' that it was the time when Mūsā عليه السلام had already announced his prophethood and had started preaching the religion of truth. As a result of his preaching some people had converted, and were known as his disciples. The word مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ (from his group - 28:15) is a proof of that. All these versions give credence to the narration which is quoted by Ibn Isḥāque and Ibn Zaid that when Mūsā عليه السلام had started talking to the people about the religion of truth, the Pharaoh turned against him and wanted to kill him. But on the appeal of his wife, Sayyidah 'Āsiyah, he restrained himself, and instead commanded him to go in exile. After that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام shifted to some hiding place and would come to the city of Egypt occasionally in hiding. Most commentators are of the opinion that by عَلٰى حِيْنِ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا (28:15) the time of afternoon is meant, when people generally take a siesta. (Qurṭubī)

فَوَكَزَهٗ مُوْسٰى (So Mūsā struck him with his fist). *Wakaza* (وَكَزَ) means to box فَقَضٰى عَلَيْهِ (28:15). The phrase of *Qaḍāhu* (قضاه) and *Qaḍā 'Alaihi* (قَضٰى عَلَيْه) is used when one is totally finished. Hence, here it means that he killed him. (Maẓharī)

قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّیْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِیْ فَاغْفِرْ لِیْ فَغَفَرَلَهٗ (He said, "O my Lord, I have wronged myself, so forgive me." So he forgave him - 28:16). The gist of this verse is that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام regarded the killing of the infidel Qibṭī as a sin, despite the fact that it had happened without any intention on his part, because it was in conflict with his status of prophethood, and thus below his dignity. So, he begged Allah's pardon for the act, which was duly granted.

The first question that arises here is that this Qibṭī was an infidel combatant (*ḥarbī*) in the religious term. Hence, his killing was permissible and preferable, because he was neither a *dhimmī* (ذِمّی), i.e the citizen of

an Islamic state nor under any covenant with Mūsā ﷺ. Then why did Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ regarded it a sin and an act of Satan? His killing should have been regarded as an act worth the reward, because the Qibṭī was harming a Muslim unjustly, and got killed in the process when Mūsā ﷺ tried to save the life of the Muslim. The answer to this question is that covenants of peace are sometimes written or spoken in express words, and sometimes they come into effect by consistent practice of the parties that amounts to an implied agreement and is as good as a written covenant. Violation of the covenants of this type is also prohibited in Islam. The covenant established by practice can be understood by the example that if in a non-Islamic state Muslims and non-Muslims are living in harmony and there is no conflict between them, and any pillage or fighting with each other is regarded as treachery, then this consistent practice of co-existence would be regarded as an implied agreement for peaceful living, and its violation is not allowed. The proof of this principle can be found in a lengthy *ḥadīth* of Sayyidnā Mughīrah Ibn Shu'bah ؓ that has been reported by Imām Bukhārī in his book in the chapter entitled as 'Kitāb Ash-Shurūṭ. The *ḥadīth* runs like this: Sayyidnā Mughīrah Ibn Shu'bah ؓ had good relations with a group of infidels before the advent of Islam, and later he killed them and took possession of all their wealth. Then he went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted to Islam, and presented all that wealth to him. On this action the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him امّا الاسلام فاقبل وامّا المال فلست منه فی شئی (As far as your embracing Islam is concerned,I accept it, but I have nothing to do with this wealth) Abū Dāwūd has quoted this *ḥadīth* like this: اما المال فمال غدر لاحاجة لنا فيه (As for wealth,we have no concern with it). The Holy Prophet ﷺ declared in this *ḥadīth* that he accepted his submission to Islam, but this wealth has been snatched by breach of trust and was a treachery, hence he did not have any desire for this wealth. Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajar has observed in his commentary that this *ḥadīth* has laid down the principle that grabbing of wealth of the infidels during peacetime is not permissible. It is for the simple reason that people living together in a city or township or those who work together regard themselves secured from each other. The agreement established through their practice is like a trust, which must be honoured by each and every person, no matter whether he is a Muslim or an infidel. The property of infidels permitted for possession by the Muslims is only that which is acquired during a war

with them. It is not permitted to grab the wealth of infidels during peacetime, when one feels secured from one another. Qasṭalānī has observed in his commentary on Bukhārī as follows:

انّ اموال المشركين ان كانت مغنومة عند القهر فلا يحل اخذها عند الامن، فاذا كان الانسان مصاحبًا لهم فقد امن كل واحد منهم صاحبه، فسفک الدّماء و اخذ المال مع ذٰلک غدر حرام الا ان ينبذ اليهم عهدهم علٰى سواء

'No doubt the wealth of infidels is permitted (to take possession) during war or *jihād*, but in peacetime it is not lawful. Therefore, any Muslim living and socializing with infidels in the manner that they are safe and secure for each other, for him it is unlawful to slay them, or forcefully grab their wealth, unless the peace agreement established through practice is abrogated through an announcement'.

The gist of the discussion is that if the Qibṭī would have been killed with preconceived resolve in the presence of an implied peace agreement, it would not have been lawful. But Mūsā عليه السلام did not have the intention of killing the Qibṭī. He only hit him with his bare hands to save the Isrā'īlī from his grip. In the normal course, it should not have been fatal, but he died all the same by that blow. Then Mūsā عليه السلام realized that a lighter blow would also have done the job of getting rid of him. Realizing that harder blow was not needed, he repented and invoked Allah's mercy.

Special Note

The above principle was explained to me by Sayyidī Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanāvi رحمه الله تعالى, when I was writing the commentary of Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ in Aḥkāmul-Qur'ān, the Arabic commentary written under his supervision. It is the last academic discourse of Sayyidi from which I have benefited, as he had completed this work on Rajab 2,1362 A.H, and after that his sickness intensified and on Rajab 16, 1362 , he passed away. انا لله وانّا اليه راجعون .

Some commentators have observed that although killing of the Qibṭī was permissible, but prophets take extra care in special cases even in performing permissible acts and avoid them, unless they receive a cue from Allah Ta'ālā. On this occasion Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام did not wait for the permission from Allah Ta'ālā and acted on his own. Therefore, in view of his status as a prophet, he maintained that it was a sin on his part, and hence, invoked Allah's pardon. (Rūḥ)

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ اَكُوْنَ ظَهِيْرًا لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ (He [Mūsā] said, "O my Lord, since You have favoured me, I will never be a supporter to the sinners." - 28:17). When Allah Ta'ālā pardoned this slip of Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ, he said in gratitude to Allah Ta'ālā that he would never again help a criminal. The second incident of the quarrel had proved that the Isrā'īlī in whose defense Mūsā ﷺ had involved himself in the brawl was quarrelsome. Therefore, by declaring him a criminal he vowed not to help such a person again. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ while explaining this verse, has maintained that the word 'criminals' stands here for infidels. Qatādah has also interpreted the verse in almost the same way. On the basis of these commentaries it seems that actually the Isrā'īlī, whom Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ had defended, was not a Muslim but he helped him considering that he was an oppressed person.

Rulings

It is worth noting here that this saying of Mūsā ﷺ has established two rulings about two issues. One, that even if an oppressed person is a sinner or infidel, he should be helped. The second ruling is that it is not permitted to help any criminal or oppressor. Scholars have argued on the basis of this verse that working in the employment of cruel rulers is also not permitted, for they too would be regarded as their associates. Many citations from the righteous *salaf* (elders) have also been quoted in support of this argument. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī) To provide support to the oppressors or to the infidels may take different forms. The different rulings about these forms are laid down in the books of *fiqh* in detail. This humble writer has also dealt with the subject in his Arabic book Aḥkāmul-Qur'ān with greater elaboration. The scholars interested in the subject may consult it.

Verses 22 - 28

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَآءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِيْ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ
﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَآءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ اُمَّةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُوْنَ ۬
وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمُ امْرَاَتَيْنِ تَذُوْدٰنِ ۚ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا ؕ قَالَتَا
لَانَسْقِيْ حَتّٰى يُصْدِرَالرِّعَآءُ سكتة وَاَبُوْنَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَسَقٰى

لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلّٰٓى اِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىْ لِمَآ اَنْزَلْتَ اِلَىَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَقِيْرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَجَآءَتْهُ اِحْدٰىهُمَا تَمْشِىْ عَلَى اسْتِحْيَآءٍ ز قَالَتْ اِنَّ اَبِىْ
يَدْعُوْكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ اَجْرَ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا ط فَلَمَّا جَآءَهٗ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ
الْقَصَصَ لا قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ قف نَجَوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَتْ
اِحْدٰىهُمَا يٰٓاَبَتِ اسْتَاْجِرْهُ ز اِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَاْجَرْتَ الْقَوِىُّ الْاَمِيْنُ
﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ اِنِّىْٓ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اُنْكِحَكَ اِحْدَى ابْنَتَىَّ هٰتَيْنِ عَلٰٓى اَنْ تَاْجُرَنِىْ
ثَمٰنِىَ حِجَجٍ ج فَاِنْ اَتْمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ ج وَمَآ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اَشُقَّ
عَلَيْكَ ط سَتَجِدُنِىْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ ذٰلِكَ بَيْنِىْ
وَبَيْنَكَ ط اَيَّمَا الْاَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَىَّ ط وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَا
نَقُوْلُ وَكِيْلٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ ع

And when he set out towards Madyan, he said, "I hope my Lord will guide me to the straight path". [22] **And when he arrived at the waters of Madyan, he found a large number of people watering (their animals) and found, aloof from them, two women keeping back (their animals). He said, "What is the matter with you?" They said, "We cannot water (our animals) unless the shepherds bring (their animals) back and our father is very old man."** [23] **So he (Mūsā) watered (their animals) for their sake, then he turned to a shade and said, "O my Lord, I am in need of whatever good you send down to me."** [24]

Then one of the two women came to him, walking with shyness. She said, "My father is calling you, so that he rewards you with something in return of your watering for us. So when he (Mūsā) came to him (the father of the women) and narrated to him the whole story, the latter said, "Do not fear; you have escaped from the wrongdoing people." [25] **One of the two women said, "Dear father, hire him; the best man you hire is the one who is strong, trustworthy."** [26] **He (the father) said (to Mūsā), "I wish to marry one of these two daughters of**

mine to you on the condition that you serve me for eight years. Then if you complete ten (years) it will be of your own accord. And I do not want to put you in any trouble; you will find me, Inshallah (God-willing) one of the righteous." [27] **He (Mūsā) said, "This is (done) between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I fulfill, there should be no excess against me, and Allah is witness to what we are saying."** [28]

Commentary

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ (And when he set out towards Madyan - 28:22). Madyan (مَدْيَن) is the name of a city in *Shām* (a large territory now consisting of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) which was named after Madyan, the son of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. This area was outside the empire of the Pharaoh. It was eight days journey from Egypt. When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was taken over by the natural fright of the pursuing army of the Pharaoh, which was not in conflict either with the prophethood or with trust in Allah, he resolved to leave Egypt. Perhaps he decided to proceed toward Madyan because it was a habitation of the descendants of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and he was also his progeny.

When Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام left Egypt, he was in a condition that he had neither any provisions for the journey nor any baggage, and also he did not know the route. In this state of helplessness he turned to Allah Ta'ālā and asked عَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِيْ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ (I hope my Lord will guide me to the straight path - 28:22), Allah Ta'ālā accepted this prayer. Scholars have observed that the only food Mūsā عليه السلام had during this journey was the leaves of trees. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has said that this was the first trial and test of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. Details of trials and tests of Mūsā عليه السلام have already been described under Sūrah Ṭahā while quoting a lengthy *ḥadīth*.

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَآءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ اُمَّةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُوْنَ (And when he arrived at the waters of Madyan, he found a large number of people watering (their animals) - 28:23) مَآءَ مَدْيَنَ (waters of Madyan) refers to the well from where people of that place used to make their animals drink water. وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمُ امْرَاَتَيْنِ تَذُوْدٰنِ (found, aloof from them, two women keeping back (their animals) - 23). That is he saw two girls stopping their goats from going to the water, so that they did not get mixed up with other goats.

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا ۖ قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ ۖ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ (He said, "What is the matter with you?" They said, "We cannot water (our animals) unless the shepherds bring (their animals) back and our father is very old man." - 28:23). The word خطب *Khaṭb* means "matter". The sense is that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام asked the two girls 'What was it that you are stopping your goats from coming to the well for drinking water like other goats? The two girls answered that, in order to avoid mixing with men-folk, they used to make their goats wait until men had left the place after watering their animals. The question arose here whether they did not have any male member in the family to do this job . The girls answered this question on their own by saying that their father was very old and could not perform this job. This is why they were doing the job.

Some very important points are learnt by this incident. One, that it was the practice of the prophets to help the weak. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام saw that two girls had brought their goats for drinking water, but they were unable to find room because of the rush of people. Therefore, he asked them about their problem. Two, that there is no harm to talk to stranger women, if no mischief is involved. Three, that although this incident had happened when *ḥijāb* was not enjoined, a situation that continued even in the early days of Islam (*ḥijāb* was enjoined in Madīnah after the Hijrah), but the underlying spirit of *ḥijāb,* i.e the natural instinct of modesty and bashfulness, was there even in those days. Because of this natural instinct the two girls preferred hardship rather than getting mixed with men-folk. Four, that it was not considered desirable for women even in those days to go out and perform such type of duties. It was for this reason that they put forward the justification that their father was very old and weak.

فَسَقَىٰ لَهُمَا (So he (Mūsā) watered (their animal) for their sake - 28:24). That is Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام took pity on the girls and drew out water from the well and satiated their goats. It is reported in some narrations that the shepherds after making their cattle drink water used to place a very heavy stone on the mouth of the well to make it unusable, and hence these girls would have only the left over water for their herd. The stone was so heavy that ten men together could move it, but Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام removed it all by himself, and drew water from the well. Perhaps for this reason one of the two girls reported to her father that Sayyidnā Mūsā

عليه السلام was very strong. (Qurṭubī)

ثُمَّ تَوَلّٰى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ (Then he turned to a shade and said, "O my Lord, I am in need of whatever good you send down to me." - 28:24). Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام did not have any food for the last seven days. He came under the shade of a tree and prayed to Allah describing his condition and need in an exquisite manner. The word *Khair* is sometimes used for wealth as in the case of إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ (he leaves some wealth - 2:180). Sometimes it is used for strength like أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ (Are they better, or the people of Tubba - 44:37) and sometimes for food as in the verse under reference. (Qurṭubī)

فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَى اسْتِحْيَاءٍ (Then one of the two women came to him walking with shyness. - 28:25). In accordance with Qur'ānic practice the story has been summarized here. The full story runs like this: When the two girls reached home earlier than usual, their father enquired the reason for that. So they related to him the whole incident. Their father thought that he should make up for the favour Mūsā عليه السلام had done to his daughters. Hence he asked one of his daughters to bring him with her. She went to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and talked to him with an element of modesty. This shows that despite the fact that *ḥijāb* was not enjoined by then, good women would not talk to men freely. She went to him with a need, so she talked with shyness. Some commentators have given the detail of her shyness that while talking she had raised her sleeve up to her face. The narrations as related in commentaries say that Mūsā عليه السلام had asked her to walk behind him and guide him from the back. The objective was that he could not cast his eye on her. Perhaps for this reason she told her father about him to be trustworthy.

Who was the father of these two girls? Commentators have different views on this subject. But Qur'ānic verses allude that he was Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا (7:85). (Qurṭubī)

إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ (My father is calling you - 28:25). It was possible at that time that the girl would have invited him on her own, but she did not do so. Instead, she conveyed her father's message to him, because it was against the modesty for a girl to invite a stranger at home.

إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ (The best man you hire is the one who is strong, trustworthy - 28:26), One of the daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib

عليه السلام pleaded to her father that as he needed the services of a man to help him in his daily work at home, he might consider hiring him for this purpose. In support of her suggestion she said further that two qualities are required in a servant. One, that he should be strong, and the second, that he should be trustworthy. The girl pointed out that she had seen his strength when he removed the stone from the mouth of the well, and his integrity when he made her walk behind him.

Two important conditions for hiring a person, and assigning a job

Allah Ta'ālā made the daughter of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام say something of great wisdom. In the present set up of employment, great emphasis is laid at the time of interviews on scrutinizing the degrees and experience of a candidate, but no attention is paid to ascertain his integrity and trustworthiness. As a result of this, there is neither efficiency nor honesty of purpose in the offices. On the contrary bribery and nepotism are so common that there seems to be no law in operation. If people could pay heed to this Qur'ānic verse, many a problems would be solved automatically.

قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنكِحَكَ إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هٰتَيْنِ (He (the father) said (to Mūsā), "I wish to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on the condition that you serve me for eight years. - 28:27). Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام made the proposal of marriage of his daughter to Mūsā عليه السلام on his own. It shows that the guardian of girls need not wait for the proposal to come from the boy's side. If a suitable good match is available, the girl's guardian may take the lead, for this has been the practice of the prophets. To quote an example, Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه had offered his daughter, Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضى الله عنها, for marriage to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and to Sayyidna 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه when she became widow. (Qurṭubī)

إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هٰتَيْنِ (one of these daughters of mine - 28:27). Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام did not make the selection of one or the other girl for the proposal of marriage, rather he kept it vague. It was not the formal *nikāḥ*, that requires offer and acceptance in presence of two witnesses, but only a discussion to have his consent to work for eight years in lieu of marriage with a girl. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام agreed to the proposal, and got married to one of the girls. The Holy Qur'ān does not describe every detail of a story, the happening of which is obvious from the context. Therefore, it

cannot be doubted here that without pinpointing the bride and without the presence of witnesses how the *nikāḥ* was solemnized. (Rūḥ, Bayān ul Qur'ān)

عَلٰٓى اَنْ تَاْجُرَنِىْ ثَمٰنِىَ حِجَجٍ (on the condition that you serve me for eight years - 28:27). Eight years service and employment was regarded the *mahr (dower)*(the dower) of marriage. Scholars have different points of view on the issue, whether a service rendered to one's wife can be taken as a valid *mahr (dower)* or not. The subject is dealt with in detail in Aḥkāmul-Qur'ān in Arabic language, under Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ. Those who are interested can study the details there. For the common man it is enough to understand that if it is not allowed in the Muḥammadī law, it might have been permitted in the code of law followed by Shu'aib عليه السلام. It is not uncommon to have minor differences in the laws (Sharī'ah) brought by various prophets.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has ruled in his Ẓāhir-ur-Riwāyaḥ that the service rendered for one's wife cannot be considered as a valid *mahr (dower)*. But in a later ruling by the scholars it is elaborated that though it is against the honour and dignity of husband to serve his wife in lieu of *mahr (dower)*, but any duty performed outside the house, such as grazing of cattle or trading, can be made a substitute for it, provided a time frame is agreed upon before hand, as was in the case of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, where the parties had agreed before hand on eight years period of service. The reason is that the remuneration of the husband payable by his wife in this case will be treated as *mahr* (dower). (Badā'ī', from Nawādir Ibn Samā'ah).

Another question that arises here is that the *mahr* (dower) is the right of wife, and if it is paid to her father or any other relative without her consent, it will be taken as not paid. In this incident the words اَنْ تَاْجُرَنِىْ are a proof enough that Shu'aib عليه السلام had hired him for his duty. So, the benefit of service went to him. In that situation how could this be regarded as *mahr* (dower) of the wife? The answer to this question is that it is quite probable that the herd of goats was the property of the girls, and therefore, the benefit of service went to his wife. Alternatively, if the goats belonged to the father and the wages were due from him, then the money of the wages payable by the father belonged to the wife, as her *mahr* (dower). It is lawful for a father to spend the money of his daughter

with her permission. It is quite obvious that this whole deal was carried out with the consent of the girl.

Ruling

The word أُنْكِحَكَ (I wish to marry...with you) has proved that the father had arranged the *nikāḥ*. Jurists are unanimous that it should be done as such. It is the father's duty and privilege to make arrangements of daughter's marriage. A girl should not arrange her own marriage. But there is difference of opinion between jurists on the issue whether the *nikah* is lawful or not, if a girl arranges her own marriage due to some need or pressure. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has ruled that it is lawful. However, this verse is silent on the issue.

Verses 29 - 35

فَلَمَّا قَضٰى مُوْسَى الْاَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِاَهْلِهٖٓ اٰنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ نَارًا ج
قَالَ لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْٓا اِنِّيْٓ اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّيْٓ اٰتِيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ اَوْجَذْوَةٍ
مِّنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَتٰهَا نُوْدِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ
الْاَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبٰرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ اَنْ يّٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَاَنْ اَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ط فَلَمَّا رَاٰهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَاَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَّلّٰى
مُدْبِرًا وَّلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ط يٰمُوْسٰٓى اَقْبِلْ وَلَاتَخَفْ قف اِنَّكَ مِنَ الْاٰمِنِيْنَ
﴿٣١﴾ اُسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِيْ جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوْٓءٍ وَّاضْمُمْ
اِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ فَذٰنِكَ بُرْهَانٰنِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَلَائِهٖ ط اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ
نَفْسًا فَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَاَخِيْ هٰرُوْنُ هُوَاَفْصَحُ مِنِّيْ لِسَانًا
فَاَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْاً يُّصَدِّقُنِيْٓ ز اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿٣٤﴾ قَالَ
سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِاَخِيْكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يَصِلُوْنَ اِلَيْكُمَا ج
بِاٰيٰتِنَآ ج اَنْتُمَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

So, when Mūsā completed the term and set forth with his wife, he noticed a fire from the direction of the (mount) Ṭūr, he said to his wife, "Stay here; I have noticed a fire. May be I bring to you some information or an ember from the fire, so that you may warm yourself." [29] So when he came to it, he was called by a voice coming from a side of the right valley in the blessed ground, from the tree, saying, "O Mūsā, I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds." [30] And saying, "Throw down your staff." So when he saw it moving as if it were a snake, he turned back in retreat and did not look back. (Allah said to him), "O Mūsā come forward and do not fear; you are one of those in peace. [31] Insert your hand into your bosom, and it will come out white without any evil (disease), and press your arm to your side for (removing) fear. Thus these are two proofs from your Lord (sent) to the the Pharaoh and his chiefs. Indeed they are transgressing people." [32]

He said, "My Lord, I have killed a person from them; therefore I fear that they will kill me. [33] And my brother Hārūn is more fluent with his tongue than I am; so send him with me as a helper who will bear me out. I am afraid, they will belie me." [34] He (Allah) said, "We will make your arm stronger through (the help of) your brother and will make you have the upper hand, so they will not reach you (to cause any harm) because of Our signs.* You both and those who follow you will be victorious." [35]

Commentary

فَلَمَّا قَضَى مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ (So When Mūsā completed the term - 28:29). Then Sayyidna Mūsā ﷺ completed his term of service, which was eight years compulsory and two years optional. A question arises here, whether he completed eight years of service or ten year's. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī has reported that when this question was put to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, he answered ten years, and added that prophets always fulfill their commitments, rather they do more than what they agree to. The Holy

* Another possible translation with a slight change in punctuation is as follows: "and will make for you the upper hand, so they will not reach you (with any harm). Because of Our signs, you both and those who follow you will be victorious." (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Prophet ﷺ was also in the habit of giving more than due to the one having a right. He ﷺ has also advised the Ummah to be selfless and considerate in the matters of employment, wages, and business dealings.

نُوْدِىَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْاَيْمَنِ فِى الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبٰرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ اَنْ يّٰمُوْسٰى اِنِّىْٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (He was called by a voice coming from a side of the right valley in the blessed ground, from the tree, saying" O Mūsā, I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds" - 28:30). This subject was also mentioned in Sūrahs Ṭāhā and An-Naml in the story of Mūsā عليه السلام. In Sūrah Ṭāhā it is said اِنِّىْٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ (it is Me your Lord - 20:12) and in Sūrah An-Naml نُوْدِىَ اَنْۢ بُوْرِكَ مَنْ فِى النَّارِ (So when he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is the one who is in the fire - 27:8), while in the present Sūrah (Al-Qaṣaṣ) it appears as اِنِّىْٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (I am Allah the Lord of the worlds - 28:30). Although the wordings are slightly different here, yet the meanings are almost the same. The incident is related in the words which suited to the situation being described. (كذا قال الامام). The refulgence that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had seen in the form of fire was only in the form of an example (*mithālī*), because it is impossible for a worldly being to see the actual refulgence of Allāh Ta'ālā. Mūsā عليه السلام is called لَنْ تَرٰىنِىْ (7:143) (You will never see Me) in respect of actual refulgence.

The place also becomes auspicious if righteous deeds are performed there

فِى الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبٰرَكَةِ (In the blessed ground - 28:30). The Holy Qur'ān has termed the mount Ṭūr as blessed ground. It is obvious that the reason of its being auspicious is the refulgence of Allah Ta'ālā, which was manifested at that spot in the form of fire. It proves that if something virtuous happens at a place, that particular spot also turns auspicious.

A sermon should have high degree of eloquence

هُوَ اَفْصَحُ مِنِّىْ لِسَانًا (He is more fluent in his tongue - 28:34). This verse points out that a high degree of oratory and eloquence is desirable for sermons and preaching, and there is no harm if one takes training in that.

Verses 36 - 42

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّفْتَرًى وَّمَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِىْٓ اٰبَآئِنَا الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى رَبِّىْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ

جَآءَ بِالْهُدٰى مِنْ عِنْدِهٖ وَمَنْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الْمَلَاُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ
غَيْرِىْ ۚ فَاَوْقِدْ لِىْ يٰهَامٰنُ عَلَى الطِّيْنِ فَاجْعَلْ لِّىْ صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّىْۤ اَطَّلِعُ
اِلٰٓى اِلٰهِ مُوْسٰى ۙ وَاِنِّىْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ
وَجُنُوْدُهٗ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوْۤا اَنَّهُمْ اِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ فَاَخَذْنٰهُ وَجُنُوْدَهٗ فَنَبَذْنٰهُمْ فِى الْيَمِّ ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَاَتْبَعْنٰهُمْ فِىْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ هُمْ
مِّنَ الْمَقْبُوْحِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ ع

So when Mūsā came to them with Our clear signs, they said, "This is nothing but a forged magic, and we did not hear about it among our forefathers." [36] **And Mūsā said, "My Lord knows best the one who has come with guidance from Him and who is going to have the best end of the abode. It is certain that the wrongdoers will not succeed."** [37]

And the Pharaoh said, "O chiefs, I do not know of any god for you other than me. So kindle for me, O Hāmān, a fire on the clay (to bake bricks) and build for me a tower, so that I may look on to the God of Mūsā. And I deem him to be one of the liars." [38] **And he and his hosts became over-proud in the land without justification and thought that they would not be returned to Us.** [39] **So We seized him and his hosts and threw them into the sea. Look then, how was the fate of the wrongdoers.** [40] **And We had made them leaders who called (people) towards hell. And on the Day of Judgment they will not be helped.** [41] **And We made a curse to pursue them in this world; and on the Day of Judgment they will be among those treated badly.** [42]

Commentary

فَاَوْقِدْ لِىْ يٰهَامٰنُ عَلَى الطِّيْنِ (So kindle for me, O Hāmān, a fire on the clay (to

bake bricks) - 28:38). When the Pharaoh planned to build a very tall palace for himself, he asked his minister Hāmān to get the bricks baked properly first, because half baked bricks could not take the load of a tall building. Some people have observed that the Pharaoh was the first one to have tough bricks baked for the buildings, as no one had used them before. Historical narrations have recorded that Hāmān had collected fifty thousand masons for building this palace. Skilled labour, such as carpenters and blacksmith, were additional. This palace was built so tall that there was no parallel to it in the world. When it was completed, Allah Ta'ālā commanded Jibra'īl عليه السلام to knock it down. He struck only one blow to it and it tumbled down in three pieces, killing thousands of soldiers of the Pharaoh's army. (Qurṭubī)

وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ (And We had made them leaders who called (people) towards hell. - 28:41). Allah Ta'ālā had elevated the courtiers of the Pharaoh as leaders of their people, but these wrong-doers were busy inviting the people towards fire – *jahannam*. Most commentators have taken the expression 'invitation to fire' as a metaphor. That is, by fire the allusion is toward evil deeds that will result in burning in the fire of Jahannam. But according to the work of my respected teacher Sayyidnā Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwār Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالى the reward of the Hereafter is the deed itself. One's deeds in this world will change their forms first in *barzakh* and then in *maḥshar*. The righteous deeds will change into flowers and gardens and take the shape of the bounties of paradise; and the evil deeds will turn into snakes and scorpions, ultimately manifesting themselves in various types of torments. Therefore, if someone invites any one in this world toward evil and infidelity, he in fact is bidding him to go into the fire. Although these evils do not manifest themselves in this world as fire, yet in reality they are fire. Thus there is no metaphor in the verse, and it rests with its true meaning. If this course of argument is adopted in explaining the verses of Qur'ān, then many of them will get rid of dependence on metaphors; and it will make the reading easy and straightforward. For instance, وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا (And they will find what they did all there - 18:49) or مَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهٗ (Whoever does good to the measure of a particle will see it.- 99:7)

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ هُمْ مِّنَ الْمَقْبُوْحِيْنَ (And on the Day of Judgment they will be

among those treated badly - 28:42). *Maqbuhin* is the plural of *Maqbuh*, which means spoilt, damaged or disfigured. Thus the meaning of the verse is that on the Doomsday their faces will be disfigured to turn black, and eyes will turn blue.

Verses 43 - 51

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَآ اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ الْاُوْلٰى
بَصَآئِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ
بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ اِذْ قَضَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسَى الْاَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ
﴿٤٤﴾ وَلٰكِنَّآ اَنْشَاْنَا قُرُوْنًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ ثَاوِيًا
فِيْٓ اَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۙ وَلٰكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا
كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ اِذْ نَادَيْنَا وَلٰكِنْ رَّحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا
مَّآ اَتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ
تُصِيْبَهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُوْا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَآ اَرْسَلْتَ اِلَيْنَا
رَسُوْلًا فَنَتَّبِعَ اٰيٰتِكَ وَنَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ
مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُوْتِيَ مِثْلَ مَآ اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى ۗ اَوَلَمْ يَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ
اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ قَالُوْا سِحْرٰنِ تَظَاهَرَا ۖ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِكُلٍّ
كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ هُوَ اَهْدٰى مِنْهُمَآ اَتَّبِعْهُ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُوْنَ
اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾

And We gave Mūsā, after We destroyed the earlier generations, the Book having insights for people and a guidance and mercy, so that they may take to advice.

[43] And you (O Muḥammad) were not there at the Western side (of the mount Ṭūr) when We delegated the matter to Mūsā, nor were you among those present, [44] but We created generations (after him) and a long time passed over them. And you were not dwelling among the people of Madyan, reciting Our verses to them, but it is We who do send messengers. [45] And you were not at the side of (the mount) Ṭūr when We called (Mūsā), but it (your prophethood through which you knew all this) is a mercy from your Lord, so that you warn a people to whom no warner has come before you, that they may take to advice. [46] And (We would not have sent the messenger) if there would have been no apprehension that, in case they suffered a calamity because of what their hands sent ahead, they would say, "Our Lord, why did You not send a messenger to us, so that we would be among the believers?" [47] But when the Truth came to them from Us, they said, "Why has he (the messenger) not been given (a book) similar to what Mūsā had been given?" Is it not that they denied what Mūsā had been given before? They said, "Both (Qur'ān and Torah) are works of magic that support each other." And they said, "We disbelieve each one of them." [48] Say, "Then bring a book from Allah which is better than both, in guidance, and I shall follow it, if you are true." [49] So if they do not respond to you, be sure that they are only following their desires. And who is more astray than the one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah. Surely Allah does not take the wrongdoing people to the right path. [50] And We have conveyed (Our) word to them one after the other, so that they may take to advice. [51]

Commentary

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَآ اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ الْاُوْلٰى بَصَآئِرَ لِلنَّاسِ (And We gave Mūsā, after We destroyed the earlier generations, the Book having insights for people - 28:43). The words "earlier generations" refer to the people of Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Lūṭ عليهم السلام, who were destroyed before the time of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام because of their denial of truth. *Baṣā'ir* بصائر is the plural of *Baṣīrah* بصيرة, whose literal meaning is sagacity, insight and discernment. Here it is purported for that light or refulgence which Allah Ta'ālā bestows in the hearts of people with which they find out the truth and discern the distinction between right and wrong. (Maẓharī)

If the word *Nās* نَاس (people) is used in the phrase بَصَآئِرَ لِلنَّاسِ (28:43) (insights for people) for the people of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, then the meaning of the verse is quite clear. No doubt for the people of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام Torah was the book of wisdom . But if the word is used for all people in whom the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ is also included, then the question would arise that the Torah, which is available to the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ, is not the original one. In this Torah many changes have taken place. So, how could this Torah be regarded as a book of wisdom for them? Moreover, it will mean that the Muslims too should benefit from the Torah, while there is a well-known *ḥadīth* that Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه once sought permission from the Holy Prophet ﷺ for reading Torah, so that he could improve his knowledge and benefit from the injunctions contained in it. On this the Holy Prophet ﷺ got angry and said that if Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was alive, he too would have been required to follow him. (The essence of this retort is that he [Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه] should concentrate only on his teachings, and that he was not required to look into the teachings of Torah or Injīl). It is worth reminding here that it was the time when revelation of Qur'ān was still continuing, and in order to eliminate any possibility of mingling of *ḥadīth* with the Qur'ānic text, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had advised some of his companions to stop writing even the *ḥadīth*. Under such a situation it is obvious that reading of a cancelled divine book was not expedient. It, therefore, does not necessarily follow that reading of Torah and Injīl is banned for all times. On the contrary, reading and quoting by the companions of that part of these books in which coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was predicted is well established. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām and Ka'b Al-Aḥbār رضى الله عنهما are quite well known for this. Other companions also did not raise a finger against it. The bottom line of this discussion is that it is allowed to benefit from the unaltered part of these books, which no doubt contains wisdom. But only those could draw any benefit from this who can distinguish between the altered and unaltered parts of the books; and they are the expert scholars. A common man should avoid such an exercise, lest he gets entangled in a quandary. The same ruling is applicable to all those books that are a mixture of right and wrong.

لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اَتٰهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ (so that you warn a people to whom no warner has come before - 28:46). The expression 'a people' is purported here for the

Arabs, who are the progeny of Sayyidnā Ismā'īl ﷺ. No prophet was sent to this 'people' after Sayyidnā Ismā'īl ﷺ until the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent. The same subject will follow in Sūrah Yāsīn. But this verse is not in conflict with the other verse إِنْ مِّنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ (There is no community, but there has come a warner among them - 35:24). What the present verse means here is that there was no prophet in 'this people' for a long time after Ismā'īl ﷺ . But after the arrival of the Holy Prophet ﷺ this void was filled up.

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ (And We have conveyed (Our) words to them one after the other, so that they may take to advice. - 28:51). The word وَصَّلْنَا (*waṣṣalnā*) is derived from تَوْصِيل (*Tauṣīl*), which literally means to strengthen the rope by adding more strings to its strands. Here it means that Allah Ta'ālā has maintained the continuity of guidance. Certain advisory subjects are repeated in the Qur'ān in order to make them more effective.

Certain rules for preaching

It shows that an important trait of preaching carried out by the prophets was that they used to convey the truth to people continuously. Rejection and falsifying of truth did not deter them at all from their mission. Instead, if someone did not listen to them the first time, they repeated it the second time, and if they did not succeed even the second time, they used to reiterate it a third time, and so on, without showing any sign of exhaustion. It is true that no preacher or sympathizer has power to change one's heart, but what the prophets could do was to keep on making their efforts without being disheartened or exhausted. Even today the same principle applies, and those who preach should take a serious note of it.

Verses 52 - 55

اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ هُمْ بِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاِذَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِهٖٓ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا وَ يَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ اَعْرَضُوْا عَنْهُ

وَقَالُوْا لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ز سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ز لَا نَبْتَغِى الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

As for those to whom We gave the Book before this, they believe in it (Qur'ān). [52] **And when this (Qur'ān) is recited to them, they say, "We believe in it. It is the truth from our Lord. And we are the ones who submitted (to it) even before it (was revealed)."** [53] **Such people will be given their reward twice, because they observed patience. And they repel evil with good, and spend from what We have given to them.** [54] **And when they hear absurd talk, they withdraw from it and say, "Our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you. Peace be on you. We do not seek (the way of) the ignorant."** [55]

Commentary

اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ هُمْ بِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ (As for those to whom We gave the Book before this, they believe in it. (Qur'ān) - 28:52). In this verse those people of the book are mentioned who had faith in the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and revelation of the Qur'ān on the basis of the prophesies given by Torah and Injīl, even before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Qur'ān. Thus they converted to Islam when the Holy Prophet ﷺ announced his prophethood. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has reported that forty courtiers of the king Najāshī of Ḥabshah (Ethiopia) came to Madīnah when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was busy in the Battle of Khybar. They also joined the *jihād*, and some got wounded, but none was killed. When they noticed the economic hardship of the companions, they told the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they were, by the grace of Allāh, quite wealthy, and sought his permission to bring some of it when they would come next. On this occasion this verse was revealed اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ هُمْ بِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ (الى قوله) وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ (52 - 54). (Marduyā, Ṭabrānī, Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ has narrated that when Sayyidnā Ja'far ﷺ had gone to Ḥabshah before the *hijrah* to Madīnah, and presented the teachings of Islam in the court of Najāshī, at that time Najāshī and many of his courtiers, who were people of the book, had submitted to Islam, as Allah Ta'ālā had put faith in their hearts. (Maẓharī)

Is the word Muslim restricted to the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ or it is common to all Ummahs?

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِيْنَ (And we are the ones who submitted (to it) even before it (was revealed) - 28:53). The word used by these people of the book for their submission is '*muslims*' which may also be translated as 'We were Muslims even before the revelation of Qur'ān'. If the word Muslim is taken here in its literal meaning, submissive or obedient, then the meaning is quite clear that the faith they had in Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because of their books, is referred here by the use of words Islam and Muslims in its literal sense of submission. But if the word 'Muslim' is taken in the same meaning in which it is regarded as appellation of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ, then it will signify that the words 'Islam' and 'Muslim' are not restricted to Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ alone, but they are common to the Ummahs of all the prophets. But some verses of Qur'ān suggest that words 'Islam' and 'Muslim' are special names of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ, for example the assertion of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام recorded by the Qur'ān itself هُوَ سَمّٰكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ (He named you as Muslims - 22:78). 'Allāmah Suyūṭī favours this course of argument and has written a book on the subject in support of his contention. He has explained this verse advocating that the word *Muslimīn* is used here in the sense that ' we were ready and prepared to accept Islam even before'. If one looks at the issue deeply, there is no conflict in the two versions; it is possible that Islam is the common attribute of the religion of all the prophets in its literal sense, and at the same time it is a special appellation of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ. It is like the appellations of Ṣiddīq and Fārūq that are exclusive for Abū Bakr and 'Umar رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین in the context of Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ but otherwise these words can apply to anyone else also falling within the scope of their attributive meaning.

أُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ (Such people will be given their reward twice - 28:54). That is, the believers who are also people of the book will be rewarded twice. A similar promise is made for the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ وَمَنْ يَّقْنُتْ مِنْكُنَّ لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَآ اَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ (And whoever from among you stands in obedience to Allah and His messenger and does righteous deeds, We will give her, her reward twice. - 33:31). In a *ḥadīth* of Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī three types of persons are mentioned for double reward

One, those people of the book who had faith in their prophets initially, and then developed faith in the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Two, the slave who is submissive and obedient to Allah Ta'ālā and His Messenger ﷺ, and also to his master. Three, the one who owned a slave girl, with whom he was allowed intercourse but he freed her and made her his formal wife by performing *nikāḥ*.

The point worth consideration in this verse is the cause for which these categories of Muslims are given their reward twice. One cause could be that they have done two good deeds for which they are entitled to double reward. In all these three cases there are two good deeds involved. In the case of believers two good deeds are faith in their own prophet first, and then in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Qur'ān. In the case of the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ , two good deeds are that they loved and obeyed the Holy Prophet ﷺ both as a prophet and as husband. As for the owner of the slave girl, his first good deed is to free her, and the second to marry her. But this explanation may be subjected to the objection that two rewards for two good deeds are applicable to all, according to norms of justice; so where is the distinction for the people of the book or believers, and the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, or the master of the slave girl? Keeping this objection in view I have answered the original question in another way which is fully described in my book Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān under Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ. According to that explanation, it is apparent by the wording of Qur'ān that in all these examples, the relevant persons will not get two rewards for two deeds, but they will get double reward for each single deed, because the principle of 'two rewards for two deeds' is applicable to all, according to the express declaration of the Qur'ān: لَآ أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنكُم (I do not let go to waste the labour of a worker from you - 3:195), that is Allah Ta'ālā does not waste deeds of any one of you. In fact one will get reward for every single good deed he performs. Therefore the double reward contemplated for all these types, is that for every single good deed they will be awarded double the reward. For instance, they will be given two rewards for a single prayer, two rewards for a single charity, and two rewards for each one good deed like fasting, performing Ḥajj etc.. If one contemplates on the wordings of Qur'ān he will note that for giving two rewards the appropriate word was أَجْرَيْن ,(two rewards) but instead of that Qur'ān has used the word أَجْرَهُمْ مرتين (their reward twice - 28:54), in

which there is a clear hint that all their good deeds will be written twice and they will get double the reward for each one of them.

As for the reason why these people have been chosen for such an extra ordinary reward, the straight answer is that it is Allah Ta'ālā's prerogative to declare any deed preferable or superior to other deeds, and enhance its reward. No one has the right to question as to why He has enhanced the reward for a particular act as compared to the other, or why has He increased the reward of fasting while He has not done so in the case of *zakāh* and charity. It is possible that the pedestal of deeds, mentioned in the verse under reference and the *ḥadīth* of Bukhārī, is higher in the sight of Allah in comparison to other deeds, and hence double the reward. Some prominent scholars have given the reason of this preference that they require excessive effort and hardship. This explanation is also probable, and the word بِمَا صَبَرُوْا (because they observed patience) towards the end of this verse can be taken as a proof for the argument that the ground for double reward is their endurance on hardship. (Only Allah knows best).

وَيَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ (And they repel evil with good - 28:54). The scholars have made different assertions while explaining 'evil' and 'good deed' as they are contemplated in this verse. Some have explained that 'good deed' stands here for obedience, and 'evil' for sin, and the sense is that every good deed wipes out the sin, as is maintained in a *ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ؓ اَتبِعِ الْحَسَنَةَ السَّيِّئَةَ تَمْحُهَا (Perform a good deed after an evil deed, and it will wipe out the evil). According to this interpretation, the verse is praising these people that whenever they commit an evil act by mistake, they wipe it out by doing some good act. Some others are of the opinion that *Ḥasanah* (good deed) in this verse is used for knowledge and serenity, and *sayyi'ah* for ignorance and negligence. Thus it means that these people respond to the ignorant acts of others with serenity and forbearance and not with a similar ignorance. As a matter of fact, there is no contradiction in these explanations, because the words *ḥasanah* and *sayyi'ah*, that is virtue and evil, encompass all these things.

There are two important advices in this verse:

Firstly, if someone commits a sin, its best remedy is that he should look for doing something good. The virtuous deed becomes expiation for the

sin, as quoted in the *ḥadīth* of Sayyidnā Mu'ādh ﷺ above. Secondly, if a person behaves with someone badly, the wronged one is within his right to take revenge, provided he does not exceed the wrong done to him. However, it is much better for him that, instead of taking revenge, he returns the cruelty with kindness and the evil with virtue. It is an act of high degree of nobility of character. There are innumerable benefits in such an act, both in this world and in the Hereafter. In another Qur'ānic verse this advice is given in very clear words اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِىْ هِىَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِىْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَه' عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّه' وَلِىٌّ حَمِيْمٌ (Repel with that which is fairer and behold, he between whom and thee there is enmity shall be as if he were a loyal friend - 41:34). It means that one should act kindly in return of cruelty. In this way his foe will become his sincere friend.

سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْتَغِى الْجٰهِلِيْنَ (Peace be on you. We do not seek (the way of) the ignorant. - 28:55). These people have a good quality in that when they hear something stupid from an ignorant foe, they simply say *salām*, instead of giving a reply. They do not entangle themselves with the ignorant. Imām Jaṣṣāṣ رحمه الله تعالى has said that there are two kinds of *salāms*. One is for salutation, as Muslims do to one another. The other type is for *musālamah* (adopting peaceful attitude with others) and *mutārakah*, (to avoid debate) which is to convey to one's adversary that he does not wish to take note of the latter's stupidity. At this place the latter meaning is intended.

Verse 56

اِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِىْ مَنْ اَحْبَبْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِىْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾

You cannot give guidance to whomsoever you wish, but Allah gives guidance to whomsoever He wills, and He knows best the ones who are on the right path. [56]

Commentary

The word هداية *hidāyah* (guidance) is used for several meanings. One meaning is to show the path, which does not necessarily mean that the one shown the path will reach his destination. Another meaning of *hidāyah* is to make one reach his destination. According to first meaning

of the word it is but obvious that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and all other prophets were guides, and that imparting guidance was within their control, because it was the obligation of their duty. If they did not have the control over imparting guidance, how could have they fulfilled their obligation? Therefore, the statement made in this verse that he did not have control over guidance, relate to the second meaning of this word that is to make one reach his destination. It means that it was not his duty or obligation to put faith in one's heart in order to make him convert to Islam by his teachings and preaching. This is in the control of Allah Ta'ālā only. The meaning and types of *hidāyah* have already been discussed in detail under Sūrah Al-Baqarah.

Saḥīḥ Muslim has reported that this verse was revealed about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ uncle, Abū Ṭālib. It was his ﷺ great desire that Abū Ṭālib should accept the faith. It was for this desire that he was advised that it was not within his control to put faith in anybody's heart. It is observed in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī that one should abstain from discussing or passing judgment unnecessarily on the subject of acceptance of faith or otherwise by Abū Ṭālib, because this may hurt the Holy Prophet's ﷺ feelings for his natural love toward his uncle. (وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ)

Verses 57 - 60

وَقَالُوْٓا اِنْ نَّتَّبِعِ الْهُدٰى مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفْ مِنْ اَرْضِنَا ؕ اَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَّهُمْ
حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا يُّجْبٰٓى اِلَيْهِ ثَمَرٰتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍۢ بَطِرَتْ مَعِيْشَتَهَا ۚ فَتِلْكَ
مَسٰكِنُهُمْ لَمْ تُسْكَنْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ؕ وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ
﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى حَتّٰى يَبْعَثَ فِيْٓ اُمِّهَا رَسُوْلًا
يَّتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۚ وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرٰٓى اِلَّا وَاَهْلُهَا ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتُهَا ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ
خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And they said, "If we follow the guidance with you (O

Muḥammad), we will be driven out of our land." Is it not that We have established them in the peaceful Haram (sanctuary) to which the fruits of everything are drawn as a provision from Us? But most of them do not know. [57] **And how many a town have We destroyed that were over-proud of their means of living. So, those are their habitations which were never inhabited after them except a few, and We alone were the inheritors.** [58] **And your Lord is not to destroy the towns unless he sends to their central place a messenger who recites to them Our verses. And We are not to destroy the towns except when their people are wrongdoers.** [59] **And whatever of anything you are given is (no more than) an enjoyment of the worldly life and its decoration, and that which is with Allah is much better and far more lasting. So do you not understand?** [60]

Commentary

وَقَالُوٓا اِنۡ نَّتَّبِعِ الۡهُدٰى مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفۡ مِنۡ اَرۡضِنَا (And they said, "If we follow the guidance with you (O Muḥammad), we will be driven out of our land." - 28:57). Ḥārith Ibn 'Uthmān and other infidels of Makkah put forward one of the reasons for their non-acceptance of faith that although they believed that his teachings were based on truth, but they feared that if they followed him, the entire people of Arabia would turn against them, and as a consequence they will be driven out of their land. (Nasai'ī etc.). The Holy Qur'ān has given three answers to their lame excuse. One, اَوَلَمۡ نُمَكِّنۡ لَّهُمۡ حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا يُّجۡبٰٓى اِلَيۡهِ ثَمَرٰتُ كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ (Is it not that We have established them in the peaceful *ḥaram* (sanctuary) to which the fruits of everything are drawn as a provision from Us - 28:57) that is this excuse of theirs is false, because Allah Ta'ālā had already made special arrangements for the safety of the people of Makkah by making its land *ḥaram*. All the tribes of Arabia, despite their mutual feuds and infidelity, were unanimous on the point that killing and feuds were strictly prohibited on the land of Makkah. If a killer of father met the son in the *ḥaram*, despite extremely strong feelings of revenge, he could not raise his hand against him. It was just not possible for any one to kill or harm his enemy on the ground of *ḥaram*. Therefore, it was not at all a convincing excuse for not converting to faith. How was it possible that the Creator of everything would let them die as a believer, when He had made arrangement for their safety in *ḥaram* even as infidels? Yaḥyā Ibn Sallām has explained this verse as:

'You were safe and secure because of *ḥaram*, and were enjoying the sustenance provided by Me in plenty, still you used to worship others instead of Me. You did not get worried over this situation of yours, and on the contrary got worried over conversion to faith in Me'. (Qurṭubī)

In this verse two qualities of *ḥaram* are described. One, that it is a place of peace, and the other that fruits from different parts of the world were brought there.

Availability of all types of produce in *Ḥaram* of Makkah is a special Divine gift

Allah Ta'ālā chose Makkah Mukkarramah, out of the whole world, to establish the Ka'ba and Haram. In terms of its environment and geography it is a region where, under the normal circumstances, hardly any economic or commercial goods and activity should have existed. Even the basic staple agricultural products like wheat, rice, gram and sundry cereals were not cultivated before on a significant scale, let alone fruits and variety of vegetables. Though, in recent years there has been some emphasis from the Saudi Government toward their cultivation. Yet, everything is available there in such an abundance that one gets amazed. During the period of *ḥajj* some two million people are drawn from all over the world and stay there for an average of one month. It has never been heard that any scarcity of food items was ever experienced there. On the contrary, everyone can witness that cooked and prepared food to cater for all types of races and people is readily available all the time. If we ponder over Qur'ānic words, which say ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (fruits of everything), a question arises that fruits are the product of trees, so it would have been apt to say ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَجَرٍ (fruits of every tree) rather than ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (fruits of every thing). Therefore, it is quite likely that the word 'every thing' used here, encompasses the produce and products of all kind, including agricultural produce. For instance, the produce of industrial factories is also their fruit. Hence, the gist of the discussion is that not only food items but also all sorts of things of human need would be made available in Makkah. Any one visiting Makkah, either for *ḥajj* or *'umrah*, can confirm that everything produced anywhere in the world is readily available there. This was one reply to the excuse put forward by the infidels of Makkah, and the gist of the reply was that the Lord who had been so kind to them that He had made available all the bounties of the world in

their city,despite the fact that they are not produced there, and who had made the city completely free of risk and danger, it is the worst kind of ignorance to presume about Him that He would deprive them of these benefits if they would believe in Him.

The second reply to their excuse is given in the next verse وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ بَطِرَتْ مَعِيْشَتَهَا (And how many a town have We destroyed that were over-proud of their means of living. - 28:58). In this reply it is stressed that they should recall the plight of other infidel people of the world, how their habitations, strong forts, and all means of their protection were destroyed, because of their infidelity and rejection of the truth. What they should actually fear is their infidelity and associating others with Allah, which is the real cause of destruction. How foolish and ill informed they were that they feared faith and not the denial of truth and infidelity.

The third reply was given in the following verse: وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا (And whatever thing you are given is the enjoyment of the worldly life - 28:60). Here it is explained that just in case they did get involved in some sort of trouble as a result of accepting faith, it would last only for a few days. Just as mundane wealth and comfort is temporary and would last for a short time only, worldly troubles are also transient and short-lived. Therefore, the wisdom lies in that one should seek and care for the comfort and happiness that is lasting. If one has to suffer trouble for a short time for the sake of permanent and ever lasting wealth and comfort, it is well worth it.

لَمْ تُسْكَنْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا (Which were never inhabited after them except a few - 28:56). The habitations of the earlier people, which were destroyed by the Divine torment, still lie uninhabited, with the exception of a few. If the exemption 'except a few' is taken for those living there and the places destroyed, as Zajjāj has construed it, then the meaning would be that those places could never get inhabited, except a few that are inhabited. But Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has given another explanation of the verse. According to his interpretation, the exemption is not for the place and houses, but for the time. Thus the meaning would be that even if someone lives there, it is for a short time, like travelers, who cannot be regarded as permanent residents.

حَتّٰى يَبْعَثَ فِيْٓ اُمِّهَا رَسُوْلًا (Unless he sends to their central place a messenger -

28:59). Popular meaning of the word *'Umm* is mother, and since mother is the very basis of human creation, hence the word *'Umm* (أُمّ) is also used extensively for origin, base, and foundation. The pronoun *hā* (translated above as 'their') refers back to the towns, and 'mother of the towns' means the central town. The meaning of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā does not destroy a people unless He had sent His message through His messengers in their main cities. When the invitation to truth had reached, and yet people did not accept it, only then the torment is sent on those cities.

This verse has pointed out that Allah's messengers and prophets are generally sent in big cities, and not in smaller towns, because such towns are normally under the influence of big cities, both for their economic and educational needs. If something is known in a big city, it becomes known automatically in the smaller towns around it. Hence, when a prophet is sent in a big city and he starts his call to the truth, the message is spread out in the surrounding towns in no time. This way Allah Ta'ālā's message reaches to all and sundry, and if they reject the message of truth, the torment is sent to all of them.

Small towns and villages are subject to the same laws as are applicable to the main cities

As in the case of economic needs, the smaller habitations are dependent on cities, and draw their requirements from there, similarly, when a law or an order is promulgated in the city, it automatically becomes effective in the surrounding towns and villages also. The excuse of having no knowledge of the law is not acceptable.

In the case of sighting of the moon for observing Ramaḍān and Eids (Shawwāl and Ḍhulhajjah) too, the same principle has been declared by the jurists as applicable. That is, if the evidence of witnesses in the city establishes the sighting of moon, then the people of towns and villages would have to follow the same. But in the case of other cities, it would only apply when the Qāḍī of that city accepts the evidence and makes the announcement. (Al-Fatāwā al-Ghayāthiyyah)

وَمَا عِندَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ وَّأَبْقٰى (And that which is with Allah is much better and far more lasting - 28:60). That is the mundane wealth and comforts are all mortal. But the recompense one would get in the Hereafter for the good deeds done in the world is much superior and ever lasting as compared to

the temporary worldly wealth and comforts. The best of comforts of this world are no match to the bounties of the Hereafter. Then, no matter how attractive mundane comforts are, they are but temporary. As against that, the bounties of the Hereafter will last forever. There is no doubt that anyone having some sense would prefer the better comforts and the ones that will last for ever, rather than the short-lived temporary ones.

The sign of prudence is that one does not involve himself too much in worldly matters and cares more for the Hereafter

Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has said that if a person bequeaths his wealth and property to be given to the wisest men, then the beneficiaries of such a will are those busy in worshipping and obeying Allah Ta'ālā, because what they are doing is the demand of wisdom, and no doubt they are the wisest among worldly people. This ruling is also mentioned in Ad-Durr-al-Mukhtār, the famous book of Ḥanafī school. See its chapter on '*wasiyyah*'.

Verses 61 - 67

اَفَمَنْ وَّعَدْنٰهُ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ لَاقِيْهِ كَمَنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ
فَيَقُوْلُ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ اَغْوَيْنَا ۚ اَغْوَيْنٰهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا ۚ تَبَرَّاْنَآ
اِلَيْكَ ز مَا كَانُوْٓا اِيَّانَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقِيْلَ ادْعُوْا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ
فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهُمْ وَ رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ لَوْ اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا
يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ مَاذَآ اَجَبْتُمُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾
فَعَمِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَنْۢبَآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ تَابَ
وَاٰمَنَ وَ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَعَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾

Is then the one, to whom We have made a good promise which he is going to meet, like the one whom We have given the benefit of enjoying the worldly life, then on

the Day of Judgment he will be among those arraigned? [61] **And (remember) the Day when He will call them and say, "Where are My 'partners' you used to claim?** [62] **Those against whom the word will come true will say, "Our Lord, these are the ones whom we led astray. We led them astray as we ourselves went astray. We negate before you our responsibility (in respect of them); it was not we (alone) whom they worshipped.** [63] **And it will be said, "Call upon your co-gods." So they will call upon them, but they will not respond to them, and they will see the punishment. Would that they had taken the right path!** [64]

And (remember) the Day when He (Allah) will call them and say, "What response did you give to the messengers?" [65] **So the events will be obscured to them and they will not (be able to) ask each other.** [66] **As for the one who repents and becomes a believer and acts righteously, it is likely that he will be among the successful.** [67]

Commentary

The very first question infidels and disbelievers will be asked at the Tumultuous Place (*maḥshar*) will be about *shirk* (associating someone else with Allah), that is, 'where are those Satans today whom you used to associate with Us? Can they provide you any help today?' In response to these queries the disbelievers would say that it was not a fault of theirs, as they did not associate them with Allah on their own. It was the Satan who deluded them. Then Allah Ta'ālā would ask the Satans to say if they had anything in their defense; who, while accepting their role of deceit, would plead that they had only misled them but did not force them to act upon the same. Thus, the Satans would confess that they did commit the crime, but the infidels too were not free from its commission. Because just as they led them astray, similarly at the same time, the prophets and their deputies also guided them towards the Right Path with sound arguments; making the Truth crystal clear to them . They rejected the Truth presented by the prophets and instead listened to us using their free will and discretion. So, how could they be free from the blame? It proves that if someone chooses to follow those who wish to put him on the wrong path on his own good will, despite the fact that he has before him clear cut arguments against them and the righteous way to follow, then he has no

excuse to offer.

Verses 68 - 73

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ ؕ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ ؕ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ
وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُوْرُهُمْ وَمَا
يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَهُوَ اللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِى الْاُوْلٰى وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۫
وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ
الَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ اِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِضِيَآءٍ ؕ اَفَلَا
تَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا اِلٰى
يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ اِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُوْنَ فِيْهِ ؕ اَفَلَا
تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَمِنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ
وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾

And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses. Choice is not with them. Pure is Allah and far higher than their ascribing of partners to Him. [68] **And your Lord knows what their hearts conceal and what they reveal.** [69] **And He is Allah. There is no god but He. To Him belongs the praise in the beginning and at the end, and He alone has the right to judge, and to Him you are to be returned.** [70]

Say, "Tell me, if Allah makes night continuing upon you for ever upto the Day of Judgment, which god, other than Allah, would bring to you light? Then, do you not listen?" [71] **Say, "Tell me, if Allah makes the day continuing upon you for ever upto the Day of Judgment, which god, other than Allah, would bring to you night in which you may have comfort? Then, do you not see?"** [72] **And it is out of His mercy that He has made day and night for you, so that you may have comfort therein and so that you may search for His grace, and so that you may be grateful.** [73]

Commentary

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ (And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses - 28:68). According to one interpretation of this verse, the choice referred to here is Allah's choice with regard to the divine commands, and the sense is that as Allah Ta'ālā is unique in the creation of universe and no one is His partner, so is He in the issuance of His commands. He can give out any command to His creatures. But Imām Baghawī, in his commentary, and 'Allāmah Ibn Al-Qayyim in the preface of Zād al-Ma'ād have adopted another interpretation according to which the choice of Allah Ta'ālā, as envisaged in this verse, relates to the prerogative of Allah Ta'ālā by which He selects any one from His creatures for His favours. According to Bagahwī, this was the reply given to the infidels of Makkah on their observation لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيْمٍ (Why was this Qur'ān not sent down upon some man of moment in the two cities? - 43:31) that is, 'If Allah had wished to reveal this Qur'ān He should have revealed it on some dignitary of Makkah or Ṭā'if, so that he should have had respect and reverence. What was the wisdom in revealing it on á poor orphan?' In answer to this suggestion it is said in the present verse that it is the prerogative of the Lord of universe, who has created all the creatures without any help or partner, to select any one from His creatures for the special favours He wishes to confer. It is not for you to suggest whom He should or should not select, nor is He bound to listen to your suggestions.

Giving preference to one thing over the other or to one person over the other, and determination of correct standard of preference, are all Divine prerogatives

Ḥāafiẓ Ibn Al-Qayyim has drawn an outstanding rule from this verse that the preference given to places and things in this world are not achieved by them with their own efforts or deeds, but it is the result of direct selection and prerogative of the Creator of the universe. He has created seven skies, out of which He has given preference to highest sky over others, although the material of all is the same. Similarly, He has given preference to *Jannah al- Firdaus* over all other parts of the Jannah. Then, He preferred Jibra'īl, Mikā'īl, Isrā'fīl, etc. over all other angels, and has placed prophets on highest pedestal among the humans. And among the prophets has given preference to more resolute ones over all other prophets. Then among the resolute, He has given preference to

His Khalīl Ibrāhīm and Ḥabīb Muḥammad ﷺ over all other resolute prophets. Then preference is given to progeny of Isma'īl عليه السلام over all other people of the world, then to Quraish among the progeny of Isma'īl عليه السلام, and to Banī Hashim over all the Quraish, and finally to Sayyidnā Muḥammad Muṣṭafa ﷺ over entire Banī Hashim. Similarly, the preference given to companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and other elders of the Ummah, is all under the control and prerogative of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ālā, and the result of His selection.

In the same way, many places of the world are preferred over other places, and many days and nights have preference over the normal days and nights. In short, the original standard of preference in the entire universe is His prerogative and selection. However, at times ,human acts may also become a cause of preference in the sense that those performing righteous acts are preferred over the others, and the places where such people live or perform virtuous acts may also acquire preference over other places. This preference can be gained by sincerity of effort and righteous deeds. The gist of this discussion is that the basis of preference in the world is dependent on two things. One is beyond one's control and rests entirely on the selection of Allah Ta'ālā, and the other is within the ability of human beings and may be achieved by righteous deeds and superior morals. Allāmah Ibn al-Qayyim has deliberated in great detail on this subject and has concluded that the four Rightly Guided Caliphs have precedence over all other companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Then Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه has preference over other three Caliphs. After that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه has preference over the other two, and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه over Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه. He has proved this sequence with the help of two standards discussed above. Shah Abdul Azīz Dehlavi رحمه الله تعالى has also written a booklet on this subject in Persian language, which I have translated in Urdu and Arabic. Urdu translation has been published under the title (بعض التفصيل لمسئلة التفضيل), and Arabic translation is included in my book Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, under Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ. This is a research work that would be of interest to scholars.

قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ الَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ اِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِضِيَآءٍ ، اَفَلَا تَسْمَعُوْنَ (الى قوله) بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُوْنَ فِيْهِ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ.

Say, "Tell me, if Allah makes night continuing upon you for

ever upto the Day of Judgment, which god, other than Allah, would bring to you light? Then do you not listen?". Say, "Tell me, if Allah makes the day continuing upon you for ever upto the Day of Judgment, which god, other than Allah, would bring to you night in which you may have comfort. Then, do you not see?" 28:71-72.

Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned a benefit of the night in this verse, that it provides rest بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُوْنَ فِيْهِ (28:72). As against this no mention is made about the benefits of day while referring to its light. The reason for this omission is but obvious. It is a well-known fact that the daylight is superior in its entity to darkness. The benefits of daylight are so numerous and well known that their repetition was not prudent. On the contrary the darkness of the night does not have any other benefit except that it provides rest to every thing. As a matter of fact, its utility is based on the rest of people, hence that has been mentioned. It is to be noted that after describing daylight it is concluded with اَفَلَا تَسْمَعُوْنَ (Do you not listen? - 28:71), and after describing the night the concluding expression is اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ (Do you not see? - 28:72). It may have the allusion that the benefits of the day are so numerous that they cannot be seen, but can only be heard; hence the expression اَفَلَا تَسْمَعُوْنَ is used. The knowledge and understanding humans have acquired has mainly come through hearing and listening, and very little by way of seeing. The benefits of night are much less as compared to benefits of the day, and they can be seen; hence the expression اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ (Maẓharī)

Verses 74 - 75

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوْٓا اَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلّٰهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾

And (remember) the Day when He (Allah) will call them (the disbelievers) and say, "Where are My 'partners' you used to claim?" [74] And We will draw out a witness from every community (to prove their disbelief) and will say, "Bring your proof". Then they will know that truth is from Allah, and all that they used to forge shall

vanish from them. [75]

Commentary

A question that will be asked from the infidels on the Day of Judgment to repeat what they had replied to the prophets on their invitation to truth was mentioned in an earlier verse. Now in this verse it is stated that the prophets would testify about the reply that was given by the infidels.

Verses 76 - 82

اِنَّ قَارُوْنَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوْسٰى فَبَغٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ص وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوْزِ مَآ
اِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهٗ لَتَنُوْٓاُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ اُولِي الْقُوَّةِ ق اِذْ قَالَ لَهٗ قَوْمُهٗ لَا تَفْرَحْ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَابْتَغِ فِيْمَآ اٰتٰىكَ اللّٰهُ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَلَا
تَنْسَ نَصِيْبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَاَحْسِنْ كَمَآ اَحْسَنَ اللّٰهُ اِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ
الْفَسَادَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَآ
اُوْتِيْتُهٗ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عِنْدِيْ ط اَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ اَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنَ
الْقُرُوْنِ مَنْ هُوَ اَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَّاَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا ط وَلَا يُسْئَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوْبِهِمُ
الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلٰى قَوْمِهٖ فِيْ زِيْنَتِهٖ ط قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ
الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا يٰلَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَآ اُوْتِيَ قَارُوْنُ لا اِنَّهٗ لَذُوْ حَظٍّ عَظِيْمٍ
﴿٧٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنْ اٰمَنَ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ج وَلَا يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا الصّٰبِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَخَسَفْنَا بِهٖ وَبِدَارِهِ
الْاَرْضَ قف فَمَا كَانَ لَهٗ مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ق وَمَا كَانَ
مِنَ الْمُنْتَصِرِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَاَصْبَحَ الَّذِيْنَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهٗ بِالْاَمْسِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
وَيْكَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ ج لَوْلَآ اَنْ مَّنَّ
اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا ط وَيْكَاَنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ ع

Surely, Qārūn was from the people of Mūsā, then he

rebelled against them. And We had given to him such treasures as their keys would weigh too heavy for a strong group of people. (Remember) when his people said to him, "Do not exult. Surely, Allah does not like the exultant. [76] **And seek the (betterment of) the Ultimate Abode with what Allah has given to you, and do not neglect your share from this world, and do good as Allah did good to you, and do not seek to make mischief in the land. Surely, Allah does not like the mischief- makers."** [77] **He said, "This is given to me because of the knowledge (I have) with me." Did he not know that Allah had destroyed, from the generations before him, those who were stronger than him in power and greater than him in multitude? And the sinners have not to be asked about their sins.** [78] **Then (once) he came out before his people in his embellishment, said those who are desirous of the worldly life, "Would that we had the like of what Qārūn has been given! He is a man of great fortune indeed."** [79] **And said those who were given knowledge, "Woe to you, Allah's reward is much better for the one who believes and acts righteously. And this is given to none but to those who observe restraint."** [80] **Then We made him and his home sink into the earth. So there was no group for him who could help him against Allah, nor was he one of those who defend themselves.** [81] **And those who wished to be in his position the day before, started saying, "Oh, it seems that Allah extends provision to whom He wills and straitens (for whom He wills). Had Allah not favoured us, He would have made us sink (too). Oh, it seems that the infidels do not succeed."** [82]

Commentary

From the beginning of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ to this point, the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام with the Pharaoh and his people was narrated. From here onward another story about his is being related which is about Qārūn, who belonged to his own fraternity. This story has an affinity with the previous verses in that it was said in an earlier verse that the wealth you are given in this world is temporary, and it is not wise to get involved in its love. وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّن شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا (And whatever thing you are given is the enjoyment of the worldly life - 28:60). Now in the story of Qārūn it is described that he forgot this caution after having received the

wealth and got so much intoxicated by it that he displayed ingratitude and rejected to fulfill his obligations toward Allah Ta'ālā with regard to bounties he had received from Him. As a consequence of that, he was sunk in the ground along with his treasure.

Qārūn is a non-Arabic word, perhaps from Hebrew. It is stated in the Qur'ān itself that he belonged to the fraternity of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, Banī Isrā'īl. As for his actual relationship with Mūsā عليه السلام, there are different versions. In a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه he is mentioned as a cousin of Sayyidna Mūsā عليه السلام. There are some other versions also beside this. (Qurṭubī and Rūḥ).

A narration of Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq, reproduced in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī, has observed that Qārūn remembered Torah more than any other Isrā'īli, but turned out to be a hypocrite like Sāmirī. The cause of his hypocrisy was his misplaced love and greed for worldly wealth and status. Leadership of the entire Banī Isrā'īl was conferred on Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and his brother, Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام, who was his assistant and partner in prophethood. Hence, Qārūn got jealous that after all he was also a cousin, but why did he not have a share in the leadership. So, he made a complaint to that effect before Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. He replied that it was all from Allah Ta'ālā, and he had no power in this matter. But Qārūn was not convinced on this reply and developed jealousy against Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام .

فَبَغٰى عَلَيْهِمْ (Then he rebelled against them - 28:76). There are quite a few meanings of the word بَغٰى *Baghā.* The more popular meaning is to commit cruelty. It is possible to take this word in this meaning here. Thus the meaning of the sentence would be that having got intoxicated by his wealth, he started perpetrating cruelty on people. Yaḥyā Ibn Sallam and Sa'īd Ibn Al-Musayyab have stated that Qārūn was a wealthy man, and was appointed by the Pharaoh to keep vigilance on Banī Isrā'īl. Taking advantage of this position, he started harassing Banī Isrā'īl. (Qurṭubī)

The other meaning of *Baghā* is conceit or arrogance. Many a commentators have adopted this meaning here. Hence, the meaning of the verse would be that having got intoxicated by his wealth, he became conceited and looked down upon Banī Isrā'īl.

وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوْزِ (And We had given to them such treasures - 28:76). *Kunūz*

(كُنُوز) is the plural of كَنز (*Kanz)*, which means buried treasure. In the commonly used religious sense *Kanz* is that treasure on which *zakāh* is not paid. Sayyidnā 'Aṭā' ﷺ has narrated that he got hold of a magnificent buried treasure of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام. (Rūḥ)

لَتَنُوٓاْ بِالْعُصْبَةِ (would weigh too heavy for a strong group - 28:76). The word نَاء (*Nā'a)* means to bend down with weight, and عُصْبَة '*Uṣbah*' means a group. The meaning of the sentence is that his treasures were so many and their keys were in such large number, that if a group of strong people would try to lift them, they would bend down under their weight. Normally the keys of the locks are light, but because of their large number, their weight had multiplied so much that it was not possible even for a group of strong persons to lift them all. (Rūḥ)

لَاتَفْرَحْ (Do not exult - 28:76). Literal meaning of the word فَرَح (Faraḥ) is the happiness one gets as a result of an instant pleasure. Many a Qur'ānic verses have declared Faraḥ as contemptible, as in this very verse also إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَايُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِيْنَ (Allah does not like the exultant - 28:76). In another verse it is said لَا تَفْرَحُوْا بِمَآ اٰتٰكُمْ (nor rejoice in what has come to you - 57:23). Yet another verse says فَرِحُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا (And they are happy with the worldly life - 13:26). But in some verses Faraḥ is allowed, rather in a way it is declared as desirable. For example in verses, يَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ (And on that day the believers will rejoice - 30:4) and فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا (with these they should rejoice - 10:58). All these verses put together give us the guideline that Faraḥ is contemptible and is not allowed when it reaches the level of arrogance and boasting. Thus one gets to a point where he regards the attainment of pleasure as his own personal achievement, and not a gift and favour from Allah Ta'ālā. But if the happiness and pleasure does not get to that position, then it is not disallowed; rather in a way it is desirable. In such a situation happiness would be to express the gratitude to Allah Ta'ālā.

وَابْتَغِ فِيْمَآ اٰتٰكَ اللّٰهُ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيْبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا (And seek the (betterment of) the ultimate Abode with what Allah has given to you, and do not neglect your share from this world - 28:77). The Muslims advised Qārūn that he should try to do as much good as possible for the Hereafter by utilizing the wealth Allah Ta'ālā had given him, and 'should not forget his share in the world'.

What is his 'share in this world'? Many commentators have explained that it refers to his life in this world and the deeds that may help him in the Hereafter which include charity and all other righteous deeds. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has favoured this explanation. (Qurṭubī) By adopting this explanation, the second sentence would be regarded as an emphasized repetition of the first sentence. The first sentence has directed that one should make use of all that has been gifted – the life, wealth, health, strength etc. – to collect that which would be of help in the Hereafter. In fact this portion of the worldly possessions is one's own, which may help him in the Hereafter; the rest of the world's possessions belongs to his heirs.

However, some other commentators have explained that the meaning of the second sentence is that whatever Allah has given you, make use of it for the Hereafter, without loosing sight of your needs in this world. In other words do not become a pauper by giving away every thing in charity. Instead, retain something for your own needs as well. Under this explanation, 'your share in the world' means one's own needs in this world.

إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِندِي (This is given to me because of knowledge (I have) with me - 28:78). Some commentators are of the view that "knowledge" in this sentence refers to the understanding of Torah. As reported in some narrations, Qārūn remembered Torah by heart and was an authority on it. He was one of the seventy scholars whom Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had selected for *Mīqāt* (the appointed time and place for having conversation with Allah). But he became conceited on his knowledge, and regarded it as his personal achievement. The object of his above-referred utterance was to convey that whatever wealth he had possessed was the direct result of his personal skill and intelligence. Hence, he himself had the right on it, and that no one had done any favour to him.

However, it is more plausible in the context that the knowledge he was referring to as the basic cause of his being wealthy,was the understanding and skill of managing trade and industry, which brings in wealth. Thus the meaning is that whatever wealth he had collected had come to him as a result of his personal skill and efforts, and there was no favour of Allah Ta'ālā involved in it. What the foolish conceited man had ignored was that his skill, understanding, and experience were also the

gift of Allah. He could not have gained them on his own.

اَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ اَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ (Did he not know that Allah had destroyed, from the generations before him...28:78). The real answer to Qārūn's assertion that he had collected all his wealth by his personal skill and efforts is the one mentioned above; that even if it is accepted for a moment that he had acquired his wealth by his personal skill and knowledge, the point is that this knowledge and experience was also the gift of Allah Ta'ālā. But in order to bring home the more important aspect of the subject, the Qur'ān has stated that the abundance of wealth is of no avail and is devoid of merit, nor does it help in distress. As a proof of that, the example of the wealthy from the earlier generations has been quoted, that when they disobeyed and rejected the truth, they were suddenly caught by the torment of Allah Ta'ālā.

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ (And said those who were given knowledge - 28:80). This verse has compared the knowledgeable persons with اَلَّذِيْنَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (Those who are desirous of the worldly life - 28:79),which clearly indicates that it is not the trait of knowledgeable persons to aspire for the acquisition of wealth and to make it the object of life. They always keep their eyes toward the lasting benefits of the Hereafter. As for the mundane wealth, they take it only to fulfill their day-to-day needs, and stay content with that.

Verses 83 - 84

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُرِيْدُوْنَ عُلُوًّا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۭ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿۸۳﴾ مَنْ جَآءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا ۚ وَمَنْ جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى الَّذِيْنَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اِلَّا مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۸۴﴾

As for that Ultimate Abode (the Hereafter), We assign it to those who intend neither haughtiness on earth nor mischief. And the (best) end is for the God-fearing. [83] **Whoever brings good deed shall have better than it, and whoever brings evil deed, then those who commit evils shall not be punished except for what they used to do.** [84]

Commentary

لِلَّذِيْنَ لَايُرِيْدُوْنَ عُلُوًّا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا (We assign it to those who intend neither haughtiness on earth nor mischief. - 28:83). This verse tells us that only those will achieve salvation and success in the Hereafter who do not intend any mischief, nor are indulged in *'Uluww* in this world. *'Uluww* means pride or conceit, that is, to present oneself as superior before others, and to look down upon others and treat them in an insulting manner. Mischief is used here for oppression. (Sufyān Ath-Thaurī). Some commentators have observed that every sin is a 'mischief in the world', because the nuisance of the sin curtails the blessings of the world. This verse tells us that those who intend to do cruelty and feel proud, or commit sin have no share in the Hereafter.

Special Note

Arrogance and conceit as condemned in this verse, is the behavior in which one shows off as being superior, and looks down upon others. Otherwise to strive for oneself a good dress, a good house, and good food, when it is not intended to show off, is no sin, as reported in a *ḥadīth* in Saḥīḥ Muslim.

Firm intention to commit a sin is also sin

It is clarified in this verse that the intention for mischief and pride will debar one from the share of Hereafter. It is, therefore, clear that the firm intention of a sin is as much a sin. (Rūḥ). However, if one changes his mind for fear of Allah, then a reward is noted in his record instead of sin. But if he fails to act on that sin, due to reasons beyond his control, while he had firm intention to act upon it, then the sin stays against his name, and will be recorded as such. (Ghazzālī)

The last verse وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ (And the (best) end is for the God-fearing - 28:83) elaborates that it is not enough to abstain from mischief and pride to get the share of the Hereafter, but following the righteous path is as much a requirement. To follow all the religious obligations is also essential for the salvation in the Hereafter.

Verses 85 - 88

اِنَّ الَّذِىْ فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لَرَآدُّكَ اِلٰى مَعَادٍ ؕ قُلْ رَّبِّىْٓ اَعْلَمُ مَنْ

جَآءَ بِالْهُدٰى وَمَنْ هُوَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُوْٓا اَنْ
يُّلْقٰٓى اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبُ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ ظَهِيْرًا لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ
﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَا يَصُدُّنَّكَ عَنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بَعْدَ اِذْ اُنْزِلَتْ اِلَيْكَ وَادْعُ اِلٰى
رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ اِلَّا وَجْهَهٗ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَاِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾

Surely the One who has enjoined the Qur'ān upon you will surely bring you back to a place of return. Say, "My Lord knows best the one who has come with guidance and the one who is in manifest error." [85] **And you were not expecting that the Book would be sent down to you, but it was a mercy from your Lord. So, never be a supporter for the infidels.** [86] **And let them not prevent you from Allah's verses after they are sent down to you, and call (people) to your Lord, and never become one of those who associate partners with Allah.** [87] **And do not invoke any other god alongwith Allah. There is no god but He. Every thing is going to perish except His Face. He alone has the right to judge, and to Him you are to be returned.** [88]

Commentary

اِنَّ الَّذِىْ فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لَرَآدُّكَ اِلٰى مَعَادٍ (Surely the One who has enjoined the Qur'ān upon you will surely bring you back to a place of return. - 28:85). At the end of Sūrah these verses were revealed to console the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and to make him firm in his mission as a messenger. These verses are relevant to the previous verses in that in this Sūrah, Allah Ta'ālā has narrated in detail the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام with the Pharaoh, his enmity with Banī Isrā'īl, their fear of him and how he overpowered the people of the Pharaoh. Since the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ faced a similar situation in that he was harassed, and plans were made to kill him, the lives of Muslims were made miserable in Makkah, but following His old tradition, Allah graced them with victory over all of them. He finally gifted the Muslims possession of Makkah, from

where they were made to vacate.

ٱلَّذِى فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ (The One who has enjoined the Qur'ān upon you - 28:85). It means that the Lord of the universe who has made it obligatory on you to recite, teach and act on it, will take you back to *Ma'ād,* which lexically means 'a place of return'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has explained that *Ma'ād* in this verse refers to Makkah, as reported in Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. So, the meaning of the sentence is that although the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have to leave his hometown, especially the *ḥaram* for a short while, he would be brought back in Makkah by Allah Ta'ālā, who had revealed the Qur'ān on him, and had made it obligatory to act upon it. The Imām of tafsīr, Muqātil, has narrated that during the *hijrah* (emigration) from Makkah to Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ came out from the cave of *Thaur* at night, and bypassing the conventional route, treaded the unfamiliar paths, because the enemies were pursuing him. When he ﷺ reached Juḥfah, which was a well-known place on the way to Madīnah near Rābigh, and where the conventional route to Madīnah separates from that of Makkah, at that time he glanced back toward the route of Makkah and remembered his hometown. On that moment, Jibra'īl ﷺ descended with this verse, in which he was given the good tiding that separation from Makkah was temporary and he would return there soon. That was in fact the advance news of the victory of Makkah. It is in this background that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has observed in a narration that this verse was revealed in Juḥfah, and that it is neither Makkī nor Madanī. (Qurṭubī).

Qur'ān is a means of victory over enemies and of one's success in his objectives

While promising to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he will be brought back by Allah to his hometown which will be conquered by him,Allah Ta'ālā has made a special reference to Himself as 'the One who has enjoined the Qur'ān on him'. This reference contains a hint to the fact that recitation of Qur'ān and acting on its injunctions would actually be the cause of the Divine help and manifest victory.

كُلُّ شَىْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُۥ (Every thing is going to perish except His Face - 28:88). The word 'His Face' in this verse means the very Being of Allah Ta'ālā. Hence, the meaning of the verse is that except for Allah Ta'ālā every thing is mortal and will get destroyed and will vanish. Some

commentators have taken the phrase' His Face' to mean the good deeds performed by human beings exclusively for Allah Ta'ālā. In that case the meaning of the verse would be that those actions which are performed exclusively for Allah Ta'ālā will not be destroyed, while all other things will perish.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰہ *Alḥamdulillāh*, today on Dhulqa'dah 9, 1391 H, the commentary on Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ has concluded in such conditions that Pakistan was attacked by India and the unholy alliance of the big powers. For fourteen days Karachi was bombarded daily. The city was severely damaged. Hundreds of Muslims were martyred, and many a houses were demolished. Fourteen days war finished on the sad note that East Pakistan is cut off from Pakistan, and about ninety thousand troops have surrendered there. Killing is still going on in East Pakistan. Every Muslim is stuck with grief and bewilderment.

اِنَّا لِلّٰہِ وَاِنَّا اِلَیْہِ رَاجِعُوْنَ والیہ المشتکی ولا ملجأ ولا منجا من اللہ اِلاّ اِلیہ

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt

(The Spider)

Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt was revealed in Makkah and it has 69 Verses and 7 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ اَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ اَنْ يُّتْرَكُوْٓا اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُوْنَ
﴿٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ
يَّسْبِقُوْنَا ؕ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّ
اَجَلَ اللّٰهِ لَاٰتٍ ؕ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَاِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ
لِنَفْسِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَحْسَنَ الَّذِىْ كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾

'Alif, Lām, Mīm. [1] **Do people think that they will be left (at ease) only on their saying, "We believe" and will not be put to test?** [2] **And We have surely tested those who were before them. So Allah will surely know the ones who are truthful, and He will surely know the liars.** [3]

Is it that those who are committing evils think that they will escape from Us? Evil is what they decide. [4]

Whoever hopes for meeting Allah (must be sure that) Allah's appointed time has to come. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [5] **And whoever strives, strives for his own benefit. Surely Allah is independent of all the worlds.** [6]

And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will expiate their bad deeds and will give them a better reward (than their expectation) for what they used to do. [7]

Commentary

وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ (And will not be put to test - 29:2). It is derived from *Fitnah,* which means trial or test. The believers, especially the prophets and pious, have to go through many a trials in this world. However, they always come out victors in the end. These trials and tribulations sometimes come as a result of enmity of the infidels and sinners by way of afflictions, as have been experienced by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and many other prophets, and at times in the form of diseases, as was experienced by Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام. And for others many of these trial types are combined together.

Although the background under which this verse was revealed, according to many narrations, was the harassment faced by the companions of the Holy Qur'ān from the infidels at the time of *hijrah*, but otherwise its message is common to all times. The sense is that the pious, saints and scholars will face the trials and tribulations in all times. (Qurṭubī).

فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا (So Allah will surely know the ones who are truthful - 29:3). It means that through tests and hardships the good and the bad, and the sincere and non-sincere will be differentiated, because if the hypocrites are mixed up with the sincere believers and are not identified, it may create a number of problems. The object of this verse is to elucidate the difference between the good and the bad, and between the sincere and the non-sincere. The expression used for this purpose is that Allah Ta'ālā will find out who are the true ones and who are the liars. Since He knows about every one even before his birth, whether he is a true one or a liar, the sense carried by this expression is that tests and trials are conducted to bring the distinction of good and bad on surface, so

that others should also know.

Ḥakīm-ul-Ummah Thanāwi رحمه الله تعالى has copied the argument of his Shaikh, Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb رحمه الله تعالى that sometimes people are addressed by descending down to their level of intellect. The common man makes distinction between the sincere and the hypocrites by testing him out. Therefore, according to their approach of understanding Allah Ta'ālā has said that, through various means, We would find out who is sincere and who is not, even though He knows every thing from the very beginning.

Verses 8 - 9

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا ۖ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۚ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾

And We have instructed man to do good to his parents. And if they insist upon you that you should ascribe partners to Me, then do not obey them. To Me is your return; then I shall tell you about what you used to do. [8] **And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall include them among the righteous.** [9]

Commentary

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ (And We have instructed man - 29:8). *Waṣiyyah* (وَصِيَّة) means to call someone for some action, when the call is based on advice and well wishing. (Maẓharī)

بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا (to do good to his parents - 29:8). The Word *Ḥusn* (حُسن) is an infinitive which means ' to be good'. What is meant here is to adopt good behavior. The meaning of the sentence is quite clear that Allah Ta'ālā has advised man to treat his parents kindly.

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي (And if they insist upon you that you should ascribe partners to Me - 29:8). It should be taken note of that the limit of kind treatment with parents should not go beyond the point where it comes in conflict with the injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā. If they force toward infidelity or associating some one with Allah, then they must not be obeyed, as

advised in a *ḥadīth* لاَ طَاعَةَ لِمَخْلُوقٍ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ (A created being must not be obeyed in disobedience of the Creator). This *ḥadīth* has been reported by Imām Aḥmad and Ḥākim who has held it as Ṣaḥīḥ).

This verse was revealed in connection with Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ. He was one of the ten companions to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ had given the good news of being in paradise, and who are called *Al-'Ashrah Al-mubashsharah*. He was an extremely obedient son of his mother and was always alert to look after her comfort. When his mother, Ḥamnah bint Abī Sufyān, learnt that her son, Sa'd, had accepted Islam, she got very upset and warned him against that, and then swore an oath that she would neither eat nor drink unless he turned back to his ancestral religion, or she would die of thirst and hunger, and he would be blamed universally for being the killer of his mother. (Muslim, Tirmidhī). Through this Qur'ānic verse Sayyidnā Sa'd ﷺ was commanded not to listen to his mother.

Baghawī has reported in his narration that the mother of Sayyidnā Sa'd ﷺ did not eat and drink for a day and night, and according to some other versions, for three days and three nights, and sticking to her oath, remained hungry and thirsty. For Sayyidnā Sa'd ﷺ mother's love and obedience was one thing, but Allah's command was another, which naturally took precedence over every thing else. So he went to her and said to her firmly 'Dear mother, if there were hundred spirits in your body, and they were departing one by one, I would not have deserted my religion even seeing that scenario. It is now up to you whether you eat and drink or die. In any case I cannot abandon my religion'. Having been disappointed by his firmness, she started eating food.

Verses 10 - 13

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّقُولُ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ فَاِذَآ اُوْذِيَ فِي اللّٰهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَلَئِنْ جَآءَ نَصْرٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ ۗ اَوَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا

لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوْا سَبِيْلَنَا وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطٰيٰكُمْ ۗ وَمَاهُمْ بِحٰمِلِيْنَ مِنْ
خَطٰيٰهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ اِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ اَثْقَالَهُمْ وَاَثْقَالًا
مَّعَ اَثْقَالِهِمْ ۫ وَلَيُسْئَلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾

And among men there are those who say, "We believe in Allah", but when they are persecuted in (the way of) Allah, they take the persecution of men, as equal to the punishment of Allah. And should any help comes from your Lord, they will certainly say, "We were with you."[1] Is it not that Allah knows well what lies in the hearts of the people of all the worlds? [10] [2] **And Allah will certainly know those who believe and He will certainly know the hypocrites.** [11] **And those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Follow our way, and we will bear the burden of your sins." And they are not (able) to bear the burden of their sins in the least. Indeed they are pure liars.** [12] **And they shall certainly bear their own loads, and some loads alongwith their own loads. And they will certainly be questioned about what they used to forge.** [13]

Commentary

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا (And those who disbelieve say - 29:12). The infidels had tried all sorts of devices to mislead the Muslims and to hinder the progress of their faith. Sometimes they tried to get hold of Muslims by show of power and wealth, and at others by trying to put doubts in their minds. This verse mentions one such move made by them. They asked Muslims not to leave their ancestral religion in fear of torments in the Hereafter, because no such thing was going to happen at the first place, but even the belief of the Muslims about the Hereafter would come true, they (the infidels) were willing to undertake that they themselves would bear all the torments in the Hereafter on behalf of the Muslims, and the Muslims

1. It means that such people join the infidels when they apprehend some kind of torture from them, but when Allah's help will come to the Muslims in a battle against the infidels, they will pretend to be Muslims on the plea that they had joined the infidels only because they feared to be persecuted by them.

2. The sense is that they did not believe in Islam with their hearts, and this fact cannot be concealed from Him, because He knows whatever lies in the hearts of the people.

would not suffer at all.

A similar incident is related in the last *rukū'* of Sūrah An-Najm أَفَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِىْ تَوَلّٰى وَاَعْطٰى قَلِيْلاً وَّاَكْدٰى (Have you seen the one who turned his back, and gave a little, then stopped - 53:33,34). Once some infidels hoodwinked a naïve friend of theirs by saying that if he gave them some money here in this world, they would save him in the Hereafter by taking upon themselves his share of the torment. He in fact started paying them the amount, but later stopped it. His foolishness and the absurdity of his action are related in detail in Sūrah An-Najm.

A similar sort of offer made by the infidels to the Muslims is related here. In response to this offer Allah Ta'ālā has said that those who say so are liars. They would not take upon them the burden of any one else. وَمَاهُمْ بِحَامِلِيْنَ مِنْ خَطٰيٰهُمْ مِّنْ شَىْءٍ اِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ (And they are not (able) to bear the burden of their sins in the least. Indeed they are pure liars. - 29:12). It means that when they will see the severity of torment in the Hereafter, they would not dare to take upon themselves the share of any one else. Hence their promise is false. It is also commented in Sūrah An-Najm that even if they were ready to take upon them the torment of others, Allah Ta'ālā will not allow it. Because it is against the code of justice that someone else is made to undergo the punishment for the crime committed by another person.

The other point made by the Qur'ān here is that although they will not be able to relieve others by taking on themselves the recompense for the sins others have committed, but this much is true that their effort to misguide others and to drift them away from the righteous path is by itself a big sin, which will be loaded upon them in addition to their own sins. This way they will be carrying their own sins as well as that of misguiding others.

Invitation to sin is also a sin, the punishment of which is the same as that of committing it.

It comes out quite clearly from this verse that the one who invites others to sin, or helps others in committing it, is as much a criminal as the one who actually commits it. A *ḥadīth* quoted by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه relates that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'Anyone inviting people toward righteousness would be entitled to the

collective blessings of all those who would act on his advice, without any reduction from the share of their reward; and anyone inviting people toward sin will also suffer the collective punishment of all those who would act upon his invitation to sin, without any reduction from the punishment of those who have committed that sin'. (Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Qurṭubī)

Verses 14 - 18

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ
عَامًا ۖ فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ
السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ
مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِندَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا
لَهُ ۖ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِن تُكَذِّبُوا فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ۖ
وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٨﴾

And We sent Nūḥ to his people. So he stayed with them one thousand, less fifty, years. Then the Cyclone seized them, and they were transgressors. [14] **So We saved him and the people of the Ark, and made it a sign for all the worlds.** [15] **And (We sent) Ibrāhīm when he said to his people, "Worship Allah and fear Him. That is better for you if you know.** [16] **You only worship idols beside Allah and you invent a lie. In fact those whom you worship beside Allah do not have power to give you provision. So seek provision near Allah and worship Him and be grateful to Him. To Him you are to be returned.** [17] **And if you belie me, then many nations have belied (their messengers) before you. And the messenger has no obligation but to convey the message clearly."** [18]

Commentary

It was described in the previous verses that infidels keep on their

opposition and afflictions on Muslims as a routine. In the above verses the Holy Prophet ﷺ was consoled by relating some incidents of earlier people that this practice of harassment of believers by the infidels is going on for long. But they never lost hope due to such harassments. Therefore, you too should not care about the troubles afflicted by the infidels, and should keep on performing firmly your prophetic obligations.

Among the earlier prophets, the story of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام was related first. It was so because he was the very first prophet who had to confront with the infidelity and association of others with Allah Ta'ālā. Secondly, any other prophet did not experience the extent of harassment he had to put up with from his own people. It was because he had the exclusive honour from Allah Ta'ālā of having very long life. His life span of nine hundred and fifty years (950) years as quoted by the Holy Qur'ān is true without any element of doubt. However, in certain narrations it is mentioned that this relates to the period of his preaching and teaching, and there are additional periods of his life before this and after the deluge. والله أعلم

Living such an unusually long life continuously in preaching and teaching, and enduring all sorts of afflictions, including drubbing and strangling throughout this period, from the infidels was a special distinction of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. Despite all these difficulties and tribulations he did not lose heart ever.

The second story is that of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, who too passed through many testing trials. First the fire of Namrūd, then migration from Syria to a howling deserted place, then slaughtering of the son. All these tribulations tell about the hardships he had gone through. Within the story of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام a brief mention is also made of Lūṭ عليه السلام and his people. Then upto the end of the Sūrah mention is made of some other prophets and their antagonistic people. All these stories were related to keep the spirit of the Holy Prophet ﷺ high, and to make Muslims steadfast to the religion.

Verses 19 - 23

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللّٰهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهٗ ۭ إِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ
يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِى الْأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللّٰهُ

يُنْشِئُ النَّشْاَةَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِی السَّمَآءِ ۫ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِیٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَلِقَآئِهٖۤ اُولٰٓئِكَ يَئِسُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَتِیْ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Did they not see how Allah originates the creation, then He will do it again. Surely this is easy for Allah. [19] **Say, "Go about in the land and look how He has originated the creation. Then Allah will create the subsequent creation. Surely Allah is powerful to do everything."** [20] **He punishes whom He wills and has mercy on whom He wills. And to Him you are to be turned back.** [21] **And you are not (able) to frustrate (Allah) neither in the earth nor in the sky. And, apart from Allah, you have neither a protector nor a helper.** [22] **And those who deny the signs of Allah and meeting with Him, those will despair of My mercy, and those are the ones for whom there is a painful punishment.** [23]

Commentary

The infidels of Makkah believed that it is Allah who has created the whole universe, but they deemed it impossible that the people will be resurrected after they once die. The present verses have described the fallacy of their view. It is stated that repeating the process of creation is much easier than its origination. It is strange that these infidels do believe that Allah has originated the creation, but they deny His power to do it again, while the latter is easier than the former. Then verse 20 has induced them to look around them to appreciate the splendors of the creation, so that they may apprehend that the One who has originated this marvelous creation can easily repeat the process. After establishing the Resurrection, the last three verses describe the punishment for those who deny it.

Verses 24 - 27

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوْهُ اَوْ حَرِّقُوْهُ فَاَنْجٰىهُ اللّٰهُ مِنَ

النَّارِ ط اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾ وَقَالَ اِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْثَانًا لا مَّوَدَّةَ بَیْنِکُمْ فِی الْحَیٰوةِ الدُّنْیَا ج ثُمَّ یَوْمَ الْقِیٰمَةِ
یَکْفُرُ بَعْضُکُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَّیَلْعَنُ بَعْضُکُمْ بَعْضًا ز وَّمَاْوٰىکُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا
لَکُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِیْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ فَاٰمَنَ لَهٗ لُوْطٌ م وَقَالَ اِنِّیْ مُهَاجِرٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ ط
اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَکِیْمُ ﴿۲۶﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗۤ اِسْحٰقَ وَیَعْقُوْبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِیْ
ذُرِّیَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْکِتٰبَ وَاٰتَیْنٰهُ اَجْرَهٗ فِی الدُّنْیَا ج وَاِنَّهٗ فِی الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
الصّٰلِحِیْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾

So, the response of his (Ibrāhīm's) people was none but that they said, "Kill him" or "Burn him". So Allah saved him from the fire. Surely in this there are signs for a people who believe. [24] **And he (Ibrāhīm) said, "You have taken to idols instead of Allah, only because of love (you have) with each other in the worldly life. Then on the Day of Judgment you will reject each other and will curse one another. And your abode is the Fire, and you will have no helpers."** [25] **So Lūṭ believed in him and he (Ibrāhīm) said, "I am going to leave my homeland towards my Lord. Surely He is the Mighty, the Wise.** [26] **And We granted him Isḥāque and Ya'qūb and assigned to his progeny prophethood and book, and gave him his reward in the world; and of course he, in the Hereafter, is one of the righteous.** [27]

Commentary

فَاٰمَنَ لَهٗ لُوْطٌ وَقَالَ اِنِّیْ مُهَاجِرٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ (So Lūṭ believed in him and he (Ibrāhīm) said, "I am going to leave my homeland towards my Lord. - 29:26). Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام was the nephew of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. He was the very first one to accept faith after watching the miracle of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in the fire of Namrūd. When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام planned to migrate from his hometown, Kūthā - a township of Kūfah - along with his wife Sayyidah Sārā, who was his cousin and had accepted Islam, and Lūṭ عليه السلام, he said اِنِّیْ مُهَاجِرٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ. That is 'I am going to leave my homeland toward my Lord' It meant that he wanted to go to some place where there was no obstacle in worshipping Allah.

Ibrāhīm An-Nakha'ī and Qatādah رحمهما الله تعالى are of the opinion that this sentence was said by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, because the next sentence, i.e وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ (And We granted him Isḥāque and Ya'qūb) is pointing certainly toward Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. However, some other commentators are of the view that (إِنِّيْ مُهَاجِرٌ) (I am going to leave my homeland) was said by Lūṭ عليه السلام. But in the present context, the former explanation appears more appropriate. Although Lūṭ عليه السلام had accompanied Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام during this journey, but being subordinate to him, his separate mention was not called for, like Sayyidah Sārah, who was subordinate to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, was not mentioned separately.

First prophetic migration in world's history

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was the first prophet who had to migrate from his hometown for the sake of religion. He underwent this migration at the age of 75 years. (Qurṭubī).

The reward for some actions is bestowed in this world as well

اٰتَيْنٰهُ أَجْرَهٗ فِى الدُّنْيَا (And gave his reward in the world - 29:27). That is, 'We rewarded Ibrāhīm for his sacrifices in the way of Allah and righteous actions in this world also'. He is made popular and the Imām among the people of the world. He is respected by all alike, whether Jews, Christians or idol worshippers. In the Hereafter he will be among the Ṣālihīn (righteous) of the Paradise. It clarifies that although the real reward for good deeds will be awarded in the Hereafter, but a small part of it is also given in this world. Some authentic *āḥādīth* have also described about the award of benefits in this world against good deeds, and depraved outcome of the bad deeds. Maulānā Ḥakim-ul-Ummah رحمه الله تعالى has put together all such acts in his booklet 'Jazā'-ul-A'māl' (جَزَاءُ الْأَعْمَال).

Verses 28 - 35

وَلُوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ ۡ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾ أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُوْنَ السَّبِيْلَ ۙ وَتَأْتُوْنَ فِىْ نَادِيْكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ ؕ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖٓ إِلَّآ أَنْ قَالُوا ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِىْ

عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى ۙ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا مُهْلِكُوْٓا اَهْلِ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ ۚ اِنَّ اَهْلَهَا كَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ فِيْهَا لُوْطًا ؕ قَالُوْا نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيْهَا ٭ لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهٗ وَاَهْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ٭ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْٓءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَّقَالُوْا لَاتَخَفْ وَلَاتَحْزَنْ ٭ اِنَّا مُنَجُّوْكَ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّا مُنْزِلُوْنَ عَلٰٓى اَهْلِ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ تَّرَكْنَا مِنْهَآ اٰيَةً ۢ بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

And (We sent) Lūṭ when he said to his people, "Indeed you commit the shameful act that no one in the worlds has ever preceded you in it. [28] **Is it (not) a fact that you go for men (to satisfy your lust) and rob the wayfarer and commit evil in your gathering?" So the answer of his people was none but that they said, "Bring us Allah's punishment, if you are one of the truthful."** [29] **He said, "My Lord, help me against the people who make mischief."** [30]

And when Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with the good news, they said, "We are going to destroy the people of this town. Surely its people have been transgressors." [31] **He said, "There is Lūṭ in it." They said, "We know well who is in it. We will certainly save him and his family except his wife who will be among those remaining behind."** [32] **And when Our messengers came to Lūṭ, he grieved for them and his heart was straitened because of them, but they said, "We are going to save you and your family, except your wife who will be among those remaining behind. We are going to bring down on the people of this town a punishment from the sky, because they used to act sinfully."** [34] **And We left from it (the town) an evident sign for a people who understand.** [35]

Commentary

وَلُوْطًا اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ (And [We sent] Lūṭ when he said to his

people, "Indeed you commit the shameful act - 29:28). Here Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام has described three vicious sins of his people. One, unnatural offence of man with man; two, highway robbery against travelers; and three, commitment of sin openly before others in their group meetings. There is no specification of the third sin in the Holy Qur'ān. Thus, it is deduced that every sin, which is a sin in its own right, if committed openly with indifference, it becomes a double sin, irrespective of the type of sin. At this point, some Imāms of Tafsīr (exegesis) have listed all such sins, which these wretched persons used to commit in their meetings. For instance, throwing stones on travelers and making fun of them, as Umm Hāni' رضی الله عنها reports it in a *ḥadīth*. Other commentators have reported that these insolent people were in the habit of committing sins openly before all others.

Out of the three sins mentioned in this verse the first one is most disgusting, which was never committed before in the whole world, and even wild beasts abstain from it. The entire ummah is unanimous on that it is a worse sin than adultery. (Rūḥ)

Verses 36 - 44

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۙ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ
الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَعَادًا وَثَمُودَا وَقَدْ تَبَيَّنَ
لَكُمْ مِنْ مَسَاكِنِهِمْ ۖ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ
السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ ۖ
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا
سَابِقِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا ۚ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ أَغْرَقْنَا ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَٰكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ
﴿٤٠﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۖ

اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا ۖ وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۖ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

And (We sent) to Madyan their brother Shu'āib. So he said, "O my people, worship Allah and expect the Last Day and do not roam about in the land as mischief makers." [36] **So they belied him, then they were seized by the earthquake and they remained in their homes lying on their faces.** [37] **And (We destroyed) 'Ād and Thamūd, and it is visible to you through their dwellings. And the Satan had beautified for them their deeds, so he prevented them from the (right) way, though they were people of insight.** [38] **And (We also destroyed) Qārūn and the Pharaoh and Hāmān. And surely Mūsā came to them with clear signs; so they acted arrogantly on the earth, and were not (able) to escape.** [39] **Thus each one of them We seized for his sin. So to some of them We sent a violent wind; and some of them were seized by a Cry; and some of them We made to sink in the earth; and some of them We drowned. And Allah was not to do injustice to them, but they used to do injustice to their own selves.** [40]

The example of those who have taken to patrons other than Allah is like the spider that has made a house. And surely the weakest of houses is the house of the spider. If only they know. [41] **Surely, Allah knows whatever thing they invoke beside Allah, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.** [42] **And these examples We site for people, and no one understands them except the knowledgeable ones.** [43] **Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth. Surely in this there is a sign for the believers.** [44]

Commentary

The stories of the earlier people, that are mentioned in these verses

briefly, have been related in detail in the previous Sūrahs. For instance, the story of Shu'aib عليه السلام, and those of 'Ād and Thamūd have been related in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Hūd, and the incidents of Qārūn, Hāmān, and the Pharaoh have just passed in Sūrah Al- Qaṣaṣ.

وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِيْنَ (They were people of insight - 29:38). This word is derived from *Istibṣār*, which means sight; and *Mustabṣir* is used for observer. The meaning of this sentence is that those who insisted on infidelity and *shirk* (associating partner with Allah) and got themselves involved in perdition and Allah's wrath were no fools or insane. They were very clever having insight, but their intelligence and sagacity was confined to mundane considerations. They did not realize that there would be a day of reckoning for all good and bad actions, when there would be complete justice, because the cruel and the oppressors move about in this world without hindrance, but those oppressed and afflicted are compelled to endure injustice. The day this injustice will finish and justice will be the order of the day is called the Hereafter. They are at a loss to comprehend this bit.

The same subject is coming ahead in Sūrah Ar-Rūm, where it is said يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ (They know what is superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent. - 30:7).

Some commentators have interpreted the meaning of وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِيْنَ (They were people of insight) that these people did have faith in their heart and did understand well the necessity of the Day of Judgment, but the mundane considerations had compelled them to reject it.

وَاِنَّ اَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوْتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوْتِ (And surely the weakest of houses is the house of the spider - 29:41). 'Ankabūt (عَنْكَبُوْت) is the Arabic language equivalent for spider. There are different species of spiders. Some of them live underground. Apparently those are not meant here. Instead the specie of spider meant here is the one which weaves web for itself, and stays suspended in it. It attracts and kills flies in the cobweb. Among all the known types of nests, dens and other abodes of animals, the spider's web is the weakest. Even a mild breeze can break its threads. This verse has described those who worship and place their trust in any one other than Allah, are like the web of spider, which is extremely weak. The trust of those who depend on idols or any human is as weak and fragile as the

trust of a spider on its web.

Ruling

Scholars have different viewpoints in the matter of killing of spiders and removing of cobwebs from the houses. Some do not like it, because at the time of *hijrah* the spider weaved its web at the mouth of the cave *Thaur*, and thus made a place of respect for itself. Khaṭīb has reported that Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ had prohibited its killing. But Tha'labī and Ibn 'Aṭiyyah have quoted a narration, again from Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ that says طَهِّرُوْا بُيُوْتَكُمْ مِّنْ نَسْجِ الْعَنْكَبُوْتِ فَإِنَّ تَرْكَهٗ يُوْرِثُ الْفَقْرَ (Clean your homes from the web of the spider,because its retaining causes poverty.)The chain of the narrators of both these reports is not reliable, but the second narration draws credence from other narrations in which keeping of homes clean is stressed. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

وَتِلْكَ الْاَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَآ اِلَّا الْعٰلِمُوْنَ (And these examples We cite for people, and no one understands them except the knowledgeable ones. - 29:43). After comparing the weakness of the gods of disbelievers with cobweb, it is stressed that Allah Ta'ālā provides such clear examples to elucidate the truth of Oneness. But only knowledgeable persons draw benefit from them, and the people at large do not ponder, so that they could also understand the truth.

Who is knowledgeable in the sight of Allah?

Imām Baghawī has quoted with his own *sanad* (chain of narrators) a report from Sayyidnā Jabir ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse and said 'knowledgeable is the one who ponders over Allah's message, and acts in obedience to Him, and keeps away from the deeds that annoy Him'.

This explains that one does not become knowledgeable in the sight of Allah only by developing some understanding of Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. To be on that high pedestal one needs to give a continual careful thought to Qur'ān, and then lead a life conforming to Qur'ānic teachings.

Musnad of Aḥmad has reproduced a narration of Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ ﷺ that he said he had learnt one thousand *amthāl* (maxims or examples) from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After reproducing this narration, Ibn Kathīr has observed that it was a great honour for Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ ﷺ, because those who understand the examples (*Amthāl*)

given by Allah Ta'ālā and His messenger are termed by the present verse as knowledgeable.

Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Murrah ﷺ has said that he felt very bad whenever he came across any such verse of the Holy Qur'ān, which he could not understand, because Allah has said وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۖ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ (And these examples We cite for people, and no one understands them except the knowledgeable). (Ibn Kathīr).

Verse 45

اتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

And recite (O Muḥammad) what is revealed to you of the Book and establish Ṣalāh. Surely Ṣalāh restrains from shamelessness and evil. And indeed remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing). And Allah knows what you do. [45]

Commentary

اتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ (And recite (O Muḥammad) what is revealed to you - 29:45). In the previous verses some incidents of a few prophets and their people were related, in which some rebellious infidels were also mentioned, who faced various divine punishments. There were also some words of solace for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and consolation for the believers, in that how the earlier prophets had endured various types of hardships. There was also persuasion for continuing the work of teaching and preaching, and not to lose heart under any circumstances.

A brief but comprehensive formula for the reform of people

In the above verses the Holy Prophet ﷺ is advised a brief but comprehensive formula for inviting people towards Allah. If acted upon, this formula opens the avenues leading to practicing religion with all its precept, and the natural hurdles that come in the way in practicing it are removed easily. This elixir formula is made up of two parts; one is the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān, and the other, establishment of prayers. Although the real object here was to make all people adhere to the two basics, but for the sake of persuasion and emphasis, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was directed first to practice them, because it was much easy for the

followers to act upon the teachings of Islam when they saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ practicing it.

Out of the two components of the formula, recitation of Qur'ān is the spirit behind and foundation of every thing. The next in order is the establishment of prayers, which has been selected for mentioning here to the exclusion of all other acts and obligations. The wisdom behind placing prayer above all other worships has also been explained that it keeps one away from shameless and obscene acts. The prayer is supreme among all the worships and obligations in its own right, and is a pillar to the religion. *Faḥshā'* are all those shameless and obscene acts and utterances that are regarded bad and vile in all societies, no matter Islamic or non-Islamic, for instance, adultery, murder, abduction, robbery, lying, etc. *Munkar* (translated above as 'evil') is that act or utterance on which there is unanimity of opinion of all religious jurists as being impermissible or *ḥarām*. Therefore, if there is a difference of opinion by the religious jurists, no one of the two views can be regarded as *munkar*. The two words, *faḥashā'* and *munkar*, encompass in them all the crimes, and sins - both open and concealed - which are mischievous by themselves and a great hurdle in the way of righteous deeds.

How does prayer stop from all sins?

According to innumerous authentic *āḥādīth,* this verse means that there is a peculiar effect of the establishment of *ṣalāh* (prayer) that whoever performs it stops committing sins, provided it is not offered just for the sake of offering. One should offer prayers strictly in accordance with the wordings of Qur'ān, that is for its *iqāmah* (establishment). The meaning of *iqāmah* of Ṣalāh is to perform it both inwardly and outwardly with the manners and mores the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to perform. All along his life, he stressed that the body, clothes and the place of offering prayer should be clean. Offering prayer in congregation, and to perform all actions in line with Sunnah are outward mores of the prayer. As for inward mores, one should stand in prayer with fear of Allah and humility in a manner that he is begging from Him. The one who establishes prayer, Allah Ta'ālā graces him with Divine help to tread the righteous path, and to keep away from all types of sins. If someone does not get rid of sins despite offering prayers, then there is some flaw in his prayers. It is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣain رضی اللہ عنہ

that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked about the sense of the verse إِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (Surely, Ṣalāh restrains from shamelessness and evil - 29:45). The Holy Prophet ﷺ Replied,'مَنْ لَّمْ تَنْهَهُ صَلٰوتُه' عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ فَلاَ صَلٰوةَ لَه' (رواه ابن ابى حاتم بسنده عن عمران بن حُصَين والطبرانى من حديث ابى معاوية) That is 'if anyone's prayer did not stop him from his sins then his prayer is nothing'.

Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said لاَ صَلٰوةَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يُطِعِ الصَّلٰوةَ (Ibn Jarir), that is 'one who does not obey his prayer his prayer is nothing'. The obedience of prayer is that one should keep away from sins (*faḥshā'* and *munkar*).

While interpreting this verse Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that if someone's prayer does not make him do the righteous deeds and prevent from sins, then such a prayer would draw him even farther from Allah Ta'ālā.

Ibn Kathīr has reproduced all the three narrations in one place and has concluded that these *āḥādīth* are not *marfū'* which means that these words are not the words spoken by the Holy Prophet ﷺ but are the expositions put forward in explaining this verse by the three scholars namely, 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣain, 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ibn 'Abbās ؓ.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ has reported in a narration that someone came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said 'a person offers *tahajjud* (night prayer) at night, and steals after the day break'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, 'The prayer will soon desist him from stealing'. (Ibn Kathīr). Some other narrations have also related that after this remark from him he stopped stealing.

Answer to a doubt

Some persons express their doubt that many a people offer prayers regularly and yet indulge in grave sins, which apparently looks in conflict with this verse. Some have replied to this doubt by explaining that Ṣalāh forbids those offering prayers from sins, but it is not necessary that all take up the advice in right earnest, and stop committing sins. After all Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* also desist every one from committing sins, yet many do not pay any attention to the advice, and do not refrain from sinning.

But most commentators have explained that the verse is not in the form of a command, but it is the effect of prayer, which desists those who

offer their prayers regularly from committing sins, by Divine help. But if one is not graced with the Divine help to get rid of sins, it means that there is some flaw in his prayers, and he has not been able to fulfill the requirements of *iqāmah* of Ṣalāh. Above referred *āḥādīth* also endorse this view.

وَلَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُوْنَ (And indeed remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing). And Allah knows what you do. - 29:45). Here remembrance of Allah could mean the remembrance carried out in the prayer or otherwise is supreme. The other meaning of the word could be that when His servants remember Him, it is His promise that He too remembers them before angels فَاذْكُرُوْنِیْ اَذْكُرْكُمْ (Remember Me, and I will remember you - 2:152). For the servants who worship Allah it is the biggest blessing. Many a companions and the generation that followed them have endorsed this interpretation. Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Kathīr have also preferred this view. There is also an allusion under this view that the real reason of getting rid of sins through prayers is that Allah Ta'ālā also remembers the servant at that time before the angels. Thus its auspiciousness relieves him from his sins.

Verses 46 - 55

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِیْ هِیَ اَحْسَنُ ۖ اِلَّا الَّذِیْنَ
ظَلَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ وَقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِیْٓ اُنْزِلَ اِلَیْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَیْكُمْ وَاِلٰهُنَا
وَاِلٰهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَیْكَ
الْكِتٰبَ ؕ فَالَّذِیْنَ اٰتَیْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَنْ یُّؤْمِنُ
بِهٖ ؕ وَمَا یَجْحَدُ بِاٰیٰتِنَآ اِلَّا الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ
مِنْ كِتٰبٍ وَّلَا تَخُطُّهٗ بِیَمِیْنِكَ اِذًا لَّارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ بَلْ
هُوَ اٰیٰتٌۢ بَیِّنٰتٌ فِیْ صُدُوْرِ الَّذِیْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ ؕ وَمَا یَجْحَدُ بِاٰیٰتِنَآ اِلَّا
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَیْهِ اٰیٰتٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّمَا الْاٰیٰتُ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَاِنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِیْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوَلَمْ یَكْفِهِمْ اَنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَیْكَ

الْكِتٰبَ يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَّذِكْرٰى لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ
﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اُولٰۤئِكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۭ وَلَوْلَآ اَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى
لَّجَآءَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۭ وَلَيَاْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۭ وَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيْطَةٌ ۢ بِالْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾
يَوْمَ يَغْشٰهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ اَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ ذُوْقُوْا
مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And do not debate with the people of the Book unless it is in the best way, except those from them who commit injustice. And say, "We believe in what is sent down to us and sent down to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit (ourselves)." [46]

And in the same way We have sent down the Book to you. So those to whom We have given the Book believe in it. And from these (the people of Makkah) there are ones who believe in it. And no one rejects Our verses except the infidels. [47] **And you have never been reciting any book before this, nor have you been writing it with your right hand; had it been so, the people of falsehood would have raised doubts.** [48] **But it (the Qur'ān) is clear verses in the hearts of those who are given knowledge. And no one rejects our verses except the wrongdoers.** [49] **And they said, "Why is it that no signs (miracles) have been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "Signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner."** [50] **Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book that is being recited to them? Surely in it there is mercy and advice for a people who believe.** [51]

Say, "Allah is enough as a witness between me and you. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. And those who believe in falsity and do not believe in Allah,

those are the losers. [52] And they ask you to bring the punishment soon. And had there not been an appointed time, the punishment would have come to them. And it will surely come to them suddenly while they will not be aware. [53] And they ask you to bring the punishment soon. And surely the *Jahannam* is going to overwhelm the disbelievers, [54] the Day when the punishment will envelop them from above them and from under their feet and He (Allah) will say, "Taste what you used to do." [55]

Commentary

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوٓا اَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِیْ هِیَ اَحْسَنُ ق صلے اِلَّا الَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا (And do not debate with the people of the Book unless it is in the best way, except those from them who commit injustice. - 29:46). It means that if one has to get involved in a discussion or debate with the people of the book, he should present his arguments in an affable manner. For instance, it is prudent to answer an impudent remark with politeness, the rage with mildness, and uncivilized tumult with dignified speech.

اِلَّا الَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا (except those from them who commit injustice - 29:46). But those who wronged you in that they stuck to their stubbornness and obstinacy in return to your dignified gentle speech, they do not deserve this kindness from you. If you give them tit for tat, you are justified, although it is still preferable that they are not replied with rudeness for rudeness, and cruelly for their cruelty. Rather they be treated with courtesy for their rudeness, and with fairness for their unfairness. Some other Qur'ānic verses elaborate this advice: وَاِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَاعُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ (16:126): That is, you are entitled to take revenge of their injustice in equal manner, 'but if you opt for patience, it is definitely much better for those who are patient'.

The advice given in this verse for a polite and dignified treatment in the case of a debate with the people of the book is also accorded in Sūrah An-Naḥl with regard to the pagans. At this place the people of the book are especially identified for the reason given right after this. That is, if they were to ponder, there is a great deal common in the two faiths, which should help them accept Islam. Hence it is said قُوْلُوْا اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِیْٓ اُنْزِلَ اِلَیْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَیْكُمْ (And say: We believe in what is sent down to us and sent down to you - 29:46). It means that the Muslims should tell the people of the book at the

time of argument 'we have faith in the revelations sent to us through our Prophet ﷺ, and also on those revelations which were sent to you through your prophets. Hence, you have no reason for any hostility against us'.

Does this verse endorse the authenticity of Torah and Injīl in their present form?

The manner in which this verse endorses the belief of Muslims in Torah and Injīl is their general faith in them, as they were revealed in their original form. It means that whatever Allah Ta'ālā had revealed in these books, they had faith in that. It does not mean that they have faith in their altered and distorted form of the text as well. Many of the alterations were made in the books even before the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and many more were carried out later. This work on amendments has not ceased yet. Muslims have faith only on that part of Torah and Injīl that were revealed on Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Sayyidnā 'Isā' عليه السلام respectively. The altered part of the books is excluded from that.

Torah and Injīl in their present form can neither be believed nor rejected altogether

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Āl- Bukhārī that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه has reported that the People of the Book used to read Torah and Injīl in their original language, Hebrew, but for Muslims they would relate only its translation in Arabic. the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed the Muslims in this regard that they should neither believe nor reject what they (Jews and Christians) tell them, and instead simply say اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ (We believe in what is sent down to us and sent down to you - 29:46). That is 'We have symbolic faith in that what was revealed on your prophets, but what you are telling us we do not consider it as authentic. Therefore, we abstain from endorsing or rejecting it'.

The status of the narrations of the People of the Book quoted by the commentators in their commentaries is also the same. The object of their reproduction in the commentaries is meant to highlight their historical position. They cannot be used for determining what is permitted (*ḥalāl*) and what is not permitted (*ḥarām*).

مَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ وَّلَا تَخُطُّهٗ بِيَمِيْنِكَ اِذًا لَّارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ (And you have never been reciting any book before this, nor have you been writing it with your right hand, had it been so, the people of falsehood would have

raised doubts. - 29:48). That is 'Before the revelation of the Qur'ān you could neither read nor write, rather you were unlettered (اُمّی). If it was not so, and you were literate, then there could have been a possibility of doubt for the infidels to put the blame that you were repeating what you had read in the earlier books, Torah and Injīl, and it was not a new revelation sent down on you by way of prophethood.'

It was a great honour and miracle for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be unlettered

Allah Ta'ālā had demonstrated so many evident and clear miracles to prove the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and it was one of those miracles that He made him unlettered. Neither he could read any thing nor could he write at all. Forty years of his life were spent in this fashion before the eyes of the people of Makkah. He did not have any acquaintance with the People of the Book wherefrom he could have learnt anything. In fact, there were no People of the Book living in Makkah. Suddenly, at the age of forty years, such a speech started flowing from his mouth that was a miracle not only in its theme and meaning, but also in the pinnacle of its eloquence.

Some scholars have tried to prove that he was unlettered in the beginning, but later Allah Ta'ālā taught him how to read and write. In support of their contention they quote a *ḥadīth* regarding the incident of Ḥudaibiyah, which says that when the agreement between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the infidels of Makkah was being written, it was started by the Muslims with the words, مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ عبد اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ (From Muḥammad, the slave of Allah and His messenger). On this the disbelievers of Makkah objected that his being the messenger of Allah was the real bone of contention, and if they had accepted him as a messenger of Allah, there would not have been any dispute among them. Therefore, they would not accept the words 'and His messenger' along with his name. Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ had written this agreement, so, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to erase it, to which he declined out of respect and reverence for him. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ took the paper in his own hand, and after erasing the words 'His messenger' wrote مِنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ (From Muḥammad, the son of 'Abdullāh).

In this narration ,the act of writing has been attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which led some people to think that he knew how to write. But

the correct position is that the act of writing was attributed to him in the narration as a colloquial expression. It is a fairly common idiom spoken quite widely that if someone gets something written by an ascribe, the writing is attributed to the former, even though he has not written it himself. The other possibility is that Allah Ta'ālā made him write this bit miraculously on this occasion. Also, by writing just a few words, one cannot be called a literate, but would still remain an unlettered. Furthermore, it would not be an honour for him to be labelled as literate, rather the honour is in him being an unlettered.

Verses 56 - 63

يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ اَرْضِيْ وَاسِعَةٌ فَاِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ط نِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ دَآبَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اَللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُهَا
وَاِيَّاكُمْ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ فَاَنّٰى
يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ ط
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ
مَآءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ط قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ط
بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾

O My slaves who believe, surely My earth is vast. So, Me alone you worship. [56] **Every person has to taste death, then to Us you are to be returned.** [57] **And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall accommodate them in mansions of the Paradise beneath which rivers flow, where they will live for ever. Excellent is the reward of the workers,** [58] **who**

observe restraint patiently and place their trust in their Lord alone. [59]

And how many an animal there is that does not carry its provision. Allah gives provision to it as well as to you, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing. [60] **And if you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth and has subjugated the sun and the moon, they will certainly say, "Allah". How then are they driven aback?** [61] **Allah extends provision to whom He wills from His slaves, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Surely Allah knows every thing well.** [62]

And if you ask them as to who sends down water from the sky, then revives the land with it, they will certainly say, "Allah". Say, "Praise belongs to Allah." But most of them do not understand. [63]

Commentary

From the very beginning of this Sūrah until now the enmity of the infidels toward Muslims, their rejection of the Oneness of God and prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and putting hurdles in the way of truth and believers were described. In the above verses a way out of this entanglement is suggested in order to come out of the turmoil and spread and propagate the truth, and establish justice – the common name for this action is *hijrah* (migration).It means to leave the hometown and land where one is forced to speak and act against the truth.

Command in connection with *hijrah* and removal of doubts encountering in its way

إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ (Surely My earth is vast. So, Me alone you worship - 29:56). Allah Ta'ālā has made it clear that His land is very vast and no one should have the excuse that he could not observe the Oneness of Allah, and could not worship Him because in a certain city or country the infidels were in power. It is made clear in these verses that the Muslims should leave the land for the sake of Allah where they are forced to get involved in infidelity and sin, and should try to find out a place for living where they could abide by the commands of Allah Ta'ālā, and persuade others also to follow the same. This is what *hijrah* is all about.

During the course of migration one is likely to encounter, as a rule, two types of risks, which may hold him back from migration. The first risk

is to his life in that the infidels and his adversaries would come in his way, and in order to obstruct his move might take up arms to finish him. In addition, there could be a possibility of his being caught by adversaries on his way out. Hence, there is yet another risk to his life. The answer to this problem is given in the next verse: كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ (Every person has to taste death - 29:57) that is, no one has any escape from death anywhere in any situation. Therefore, it should not be the trait of a Muslim to be afraid of death, because despite all possible defences one may arrange for himself, death will overcome him. And it is also part of a believer's faith that death cannot come before the time Allah has determined. Therefore, fear of death should not be an impediment in one's decision about his staying at a certain place or leaving it. If death comes during the course of following a command from Allah Ta'ālā, it would bring eternal blessings and comforts, which one will get in the Hereafter, as stated in the next two verses: وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا (And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall accommodate them in mansions of the Paradise beneath which rivers flow, where they will live for ever - 29:58).

The other risk involved in *hijrah* (migration) is about the arrangement of sustenance in the strange land. One does manage the sustenance at one's own place through employment, trade, cultivation, or inherited land, but on migration all that is left behind. So, how would he manage the sustenance in the new environment? Answer to this apprehension is given in the next three verses by saying that you regard the mundane possessions and arrangements as the cause of your sustenance, but who has given you all this? It is your mistake to consider that you have arranged it all on your own. Without the help and will of Allah nothing could be procured. If He wills, one gets unlimited sustenance without any visible means, and if He does not, then despite all sorts of visible means, one does not get any thing. For elaborating this point first it is said: وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ دَآبَّةٍ لَّاتَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَاِيَّاكُمْ (And how many an animal there is that does not carry its provision. Allah gives provision to it as well as to you, - 29:60), that is, 'You should ponder over the fact that there are innumerable animals on earth who do not collect and store their sustenance, nor do they worry about its collection. But Allah Ta'ālā provides them their sustenance daily by His grace'. This applies to almost

all animals, except a few. For instance, ants and rats are two such animals that store their food. Ants do not come out of their holes in winter; hence store the food during the summer season. Among the birds crow is the only one that collects food in its nest, but then forgets it. Thus, all the countless animals living on earth are those who neither collect their food for the next day, nor do they have means to do so. It is stated in a *ḥadīth* that all the birds set off from their nests at dawn in a state of hunger, and return in the evening satiated. They all get their sustenance daily from the bounty of Allah Ta'ālā, and the practice goes on throughout their life-time.

After stating the real source of sustenance for all, that is the bounty of Allah Ta'ālā, it is said that if you ask the infidels as to who has created the earth and the skies, or who controls the movement of the sun and the moon, or who brings in the rain, and who makes the vegetation grow; then even they will admit that it is all controlled and done by One entity, that is Allah Ta'ālā. In the next sentence it is advised to ask them as to why do they then worship any other than Allah and regard it as their mentor. From the next verse وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْأَرْضَ (And if you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth - 29:61) until the end of the *rukū'* this subject continues.

In short, the second impediment in the way of *hijrah* is one's worry for sustenance, but that too is based on wrong assumptions. Provision of sustenance is not in the hands of its resources, but it is a direct gift of Allah Ta'ālā. It was He who had provided the sustenance in the first place, and it is He who would provide it at the second place. Therefore, this second assumed apprehension should also not come in the way of *hijrah*.

When does Hijrah become obligatory?

The meaning and definition of *Hijrah* and its blessings and auspiciousness has been detailed in Sūrah An-Nisā' under verses 97 to 100. The changes in religious laws in respect of *Hijrah* were described under verse 98 in Ma'ariful Qur'ān on pages No. 552 V.2 to 558. One aspect of the subject was omitted there, which is being discussed below.

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated from Makkah under instructions from Allah Ta'ālā, and in turn instructed all the Muslims to do the same,

provided they had the means, at that time, it was obligatory for all Muslims to migrate. No man or woman was exempt from this rule. The only exemption was given to those who did not have the means to migrate.

At that time migration was not just compulsory but was also regarded as a sign of being Muslim. One who did not migrate, despite having the means for it, was not considered a Muslim, and was treated like an infidel. This point has been elaborated in Sūrah An-Nisā' verse 89 حَتّٰى يُهَاجِرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ (unless they migrate in the way of Allah - 4:89). In those days the position of *hijrah* was like professing the *kalimah* (لا اله الاّ الله). As one is accepted in Islam only after recitation of this *kalimah* (that is after testifying that he had accepted Islam as his faith), the same way it was regarded necessary to migrate to be a Muslim if one had the means. Similarly, as those were exempt from recitation of the *kalimah* who could not speak, those were also exempt from migration who did not have the means for it. This is also mentioned in verse 98 of Sūrah An-Nisā' اِلاَّ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ (Except the oppressed - 4:98). As for those who stayed on in Makkah, despite having the means to migrate, they were warned very strongly of *jahannam* in verse 97 of Sūrah An-Nisā' اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَوَفّٰهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ (الى) فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ (Those whom the angels take while they had wronged themselves, (to them) the angels said, "What were you (involved) in?" They said, "We were oppressed in the earth." They said, "Was not the earth of Allah wide enough that you might have sought refuge in it?" As for such, their shelter is Jahannam. And it is an evil place to return. - 4:97).

After the victory of Makkah, the obligatory command for *hijrah* was withdrawn, because Makkah itself turned into a house of Islam. the Holy Prophet ﷺ issued the following order: لَاهِجْرَةَ بَعْدَ الْفَتْحِ that is, after the victory of Makkah there is no need to migrate from there. The Divine command to migrate from Makkah and later its withdrawal is established from categorical statements of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The religious jurists have deduced the following rulings from this incident:

Ruling

If someone is not free to hold on to Islam in a city or in a country, and is constrained to act against its teachings or follow the infidel rites, then it becomes obligatory on him to migrate to a place or country where he can

follow and practice rites and teachings of Islam, provided he has the means to do so. However, if one does not have the means to travel or there is no place available to him where he could practice the religious obligations, then he is 'excused' in the religious term.

Ruling

If there is freedom of action to follow one's religion in a non-Muslim country, migration from there is still preferable, though not compulsory or obligatory. For undertaking migration it is not necessary that the country is of non-Muslims, rather it becomes obligatory from a country where the commandments of Allah are flouted openly, no matter even if it is called Islamic on the basis of its Muslim rulers.

Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in Fatḥ al-Bārī has adopted this ruling, and it is not in conflict with the principles of *Ḥanafiyyah*. A narration quoted in Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Yaḥyā Maulā-Āẓ Zubair Ibn Al-'Awwām ﷺ also endorses this view. The *ḥadīth* narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

اَلْبِلَادُ بِلَادُ اللّٰهِ وَالْعِبَادُ عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ حَيْثُمَا اَصَبْتَ خَيْرًا فَاَقِمْ.

'All cities belong to Allah, and all the people are His servants. Therefore, wherever you find goodness you live there'.

Ibn Jarīr has reported with his own chain of narrators that Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رحمه الله تعالى had said 'leave that city where sins and obscenity are common'. And the Imām of Tafsīr, 'Aṭā' رحمه الله تعالى, had said that 'run away from the city where you are forced to commit sins'.

Verses 64 - 69

وَمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَّلَعِبٌ ۭ وَاِنَّ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاِذَا رَكِبُوْا فِي الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ۚ وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۣ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا وَّيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ ۭ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ

يُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْكَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهٗ ؕ اَلَيْسَ فِىْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ؕ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾

And this worldly life is nothing but an amusement and play, and the Last Abode is the real life indeed. Only if they know! [64] **So when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, having their faith purely in Him. But when He saves them (and brings them) to the land, in no time they start committing *shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah),** [65] **so that they be ungrateful for what We gave to them, and so that they may have enjoyment. So, they will soon come to know (the ill-fate of their attitude).** [66]

Did they not see that We have made a peaceful sanctuary (*ḥaram*) while (other) people around them are being snatched away? Do they, then, believe in falsity and reject Allah's grace? [67] **And who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah or belies the truth when it comes to him? Is there not a dwelling in *Jahannam* for disbelievers?** [68] **And those who strive in Our way, We will certainly take them to Our paths, and indeed Allah is with those who are good in deeds.** [69]

Commentary

In the preceding verses it was said about the infidels and disbelievers that if they were asked about the creation of the earth and skies, the solar system, the water cycle and its effect on growth of vegetation, they would reply that all this is created and controlled by Allah Ta'ālā. They did not believe that any one had any involvement in their creation or control, yet in their worship they associate idols with Allah. The reason for this is اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ (Most of them do not understand - 29:63).

At this point the question arises that, after all, they were not insane but intelligent and sensible people. They performed many important and skillful jobs. Then, how have they lost their balance of mind? The answer

to this query is given in the first of the above verses by saying that they are lost in the love of material attractions of the world, which are mortal and would disappear soon. They are totally oblivious of the life hereafter, which would last forever. The life of this world is nothing more than a pastime for amusement and fun, but the real and lasting life is that of Hereafter. وَمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَّلَعِبٌ وَّاِنَّ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ (And this worldly life is nothing but an amusement and play, and the Last Abode is the real life indeed. - 29:64). Here the word *Hayawān* is used in the sense of *ḥayāh* (life) (Qurṭubī).

In this verse the life of this world is held to be an amusement and play. It means that as amusements are finished and gone after a while and do not have any objective or lasting impact, the mundane attractions are also similar in nature.

In the next verse, yet another bad habit of the disbelievers is pointed out. Despite believing that Allah Ta'ālā is unique and solitary in His creation, they associate idols with Him ignorantly. Then, it is all the more surprising that whenever they are hit by some calamity, they have the firm belief that none of their idols had the power to take them out of that. They know well that it is only Allah who can remove the calamity, and none of their idols could do anything. To elaborate this point a paradigm is illustrated in verse 65: 'when they are on a journey in the river and there is a risk of their drowning, they call out only Allah to get rid of it, and not any of their idols'. Allah Ta'ālā listens to their prayer, as being totally helpless at that moment, they break off temporarily all their contacts with false gods and look upon Him only. So, He brings them out of the storm safely. But soon after the wretched people reach the land safely, they forget about His grace in no time, and start calling the idols as His associates. This is the meaning of the verse فَاِذَا رَكِبُوْا فِى الْفُلْكِ (29:65).

Note

This verse tells us that when an infidel regards himself totally helpless and calls out Allah Ta'ālā for help in the belief that no one else can save him from the calamity, at that moment Allah Ta'ālā accepts the prayer of even an infidel. It is because at that time he is desperate (a *muḍṭarr*), and Allah Ta'ālā has promised to accept the prayer of a *muḍṭarr*. (Qurṭubī)

The declaration in another verse وَمَا دُعَآءُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ (And the

prayer of the disbelievers does not but go astray - 13:14) relates to the Hereafter, where no entreaty from them will be accepted when they would appeal for mercy against the torment.

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا (Did they not see that We have made a peaceful sanctuary [*ḥaram*] - 67). In the preceding verses it was described that the deeds and actions of the infidels were foolish and irrational. On the one hand, they accept Allah as the sole Creator and master of every thing, and on the other they associate their self-chiselled idols with Him. Then, it is not that they just believe Him to be the sole Creator of every thing, but they know well that it is only He who brings them out safely from all types of calamities. But after achieving deliverance, they get involved again in associating their idols with Him.

Some disbelievers in Makkah used to put forward the plea that although they accepted Islam as the true faith, but if they were converted to it and followed its tenets, they would be risking their lives against the Arab world, who were deadly against Islam. If they became Muslims, the Arabs would pounce upon them and kill them. (Rūḥ)

In reply to this, Allah Ta'ālā said that this was also a bogus excuse, because He had accorded such an honour and eminence to Makkans, that is not available to any people living anywhere in the world. He had made the entire land of Makkah *ḥaram*. All Arabs respected *ḥaram*, whether they were believers or infidels. They all believed that killing was not allowed there. It was not only the killing and fighting that was banned in the *ḥaram* but the hunting and cutting of trees too were not permitted. If any stranger entered the *ḥaram*, his life would be completely secured. Therefore, putting forward the risk of life as justification for non-acceptance of Islam was only a lame excuse.

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا (And those who strive in Our way We will certainly take them to Our paths - 69). The real meaning of *jihād* is to put in all efforts to remove the hurdles in the way of faith. These hurdles include those that are put up by the infidels, for which fighting is at the top pedestal, and also those hurdles that are created by one's own Self and by Satan.

There is a promise in this verse for both types of *jihād*, that Allah Ta'ālā guides those waging *jihād* to the righteous way. It means that

when there is a confusion between evil and virtue, truth and false, and profit or loss, and a wise person wonders which way to adopt, on such occasions Allah Ta'ālā guides those striving in His way to the path which is straight, righteous and without risk. In other words, He turns their hearts toward a way that may bring the divine blessing and the best results.

Knowledge improves if it is acted upon

Sayyidnā Abū Ad-Dardā' ﷺ while interpreting this verse has said that the people who strive for acting in accordance with their knowledge are promised by Allah Ta'ālā in this verse that He will disclose to them some other areas of knowledge that they did not have before. Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍ رحمه الله تعالىٰ has given yet another interpretation to this verse, that is, 'those who strive for knowledge, We make it easy for them to act'. (Maẓharī). وَاللّٰه سبحانه وتعالىٰ اعلم

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt
Ends here.

Sūrah Ar-Rūm

(The Romans)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ غُلِبَتِ الرُّوْمُ ﴿٢﴾ فِيْٓ اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ
سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ ۗ لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ ؕ
وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ وَلٰكِنَّ
اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚۖ
وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾

'Alif, Lām, Mīm. [1] **The Romans have been defeated** [2] **in the nearer land; and they, after their defeat, will be victorious** [3] **within a few years. To Allah belonged the matter before and (to Him it belongs) thereafter. And on that day the believers will rejoice** [4] **with Allah's help. He helps whomsoever He wills. And He is the Mighty, the Very-Merciful.** [5] **It is a promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know.** [6] **They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent.** [7]

Commentary

Backdrop of revelation of the Sūrah – the story of war between Rūm and Persia

In the last verse of Sūrah 'Ankabūt' Allah Ta'ālā had given the good

tiding to those who would strive and struggle in His way. It was promised that for such people, He would open the doors toward Him, and that they would succeed in their objectives. The story that marks the beginning of Sūrah Ar-Rūm is a manifestation of that very Divine help. The war referred to in this Sūrah was fought between Romans and Persians, who were both disbelievers, and had nothing to do with the Muslims. The people of Persia were fire-worshippers, while those of Rūm were Christians, and hence, the People of the Book. So, naturally the people of Rūm were relatively closer to Muslims. Many of their beliefs, such as faith in the Hereafter, the prophethood, and revelations, were common to Islamic beliefs. The Holy Prophet ﷺ made use of this part of their beliefs in his letter when he wrote to the king of Rūm(Rome) inviting him to accept Islam تَعَالَوْا اِلٰى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَآءٍۭ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ (come to a word common between us and you - 3:64). In fact it was this affinity between Islam and Christianity that caused the Persians to attack Rūm. It happened when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was still living in Makkah. According to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, this war was fought in Syria at a place between Adhru'āt and Buṣrā. The Pagans of Makkah aspired for the victory for the Persians in this war, because the Persians shared them in their belief in polytheism, but the Muslims wished the triumph of the Christians, as they were closer to Islam in their beliefs. But as it happened, the Persians defeated the Christians, and conquered the land right up to Constantinople, and built a temple there for worshipping fire. This victory was the last for Chosroe Parvez. After that, his decline sat in, and ultimately he was removed by the Muslims. (Qurṭubī).

At the defeat of Christians, the infidels of Makkah rejoiced, and taunted the Muslims that their favourites have lost. They also claimed that as the Persian infidels defeated the Roman Christians, the same way Makkans would also beat down the Muslims. This claim hurt the Muslims to some extent. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim)

The opening verses of Sūrah Ar-Rūm relate to this incident in which it is predicted as a good tiding that the people of Rūm will overcome the Persians again in a few years time.

When Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه learnt about these verses, he went to the infidels in the market place and suburbs of Makkah and announced that there was no occasion for them to be happy as after a few years, the

Christians would overcome the Persians again. Hearing this 'Ubayy ibn Khalaf challenged him and said it could not be so, and that he was only telling a lie. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ said "O enemy of Allah! You are a liar, I am willing to bet on this issue that in case the Christians would not overcome the Persians in three years time, I will give you ten camels, and if they did overcome, then you will have to give me ten camels". (This was a case of gambling, but gambling was not prohibited by then). After saying that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and narrated the episode. On that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him that he did not fix the time of three years, because Qur'ān has used the word *Biḍ' Sinīn* (a few years) under which the time limit could be anything between three to nine years. Therefore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ to go back to the person with whom he had made the bet and ask him that he would bet for hundred camels instead of ten, but the time limit would be nine (and according to some other reports, seven) years and not three. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ followed the instructions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf also agreed on the terms of the new bet. (Ibn Jarīr) [1]

It is gathered from various *āḥādīth* that this incident had happened five years before the *hijrah*. After the passage of exactly seven years, at the time of the battle of Badr, the Romans defeated Persians. By that time, 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf had died. So Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ demanded

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1- 'Ubayy readily accepted the new terms because he was fully confident that the Romans could not defeat the Persians. Given the circumstances prevalent at that time, such an unshaken confidence of 'Ubayy was not misconceived. The way the Persians had beaten the Roman Empire had left no room for their uprising again. The prediction that the Romans will be victorious against Persians had no basis in the visible possibilities, when it was made. Nobody could foresee, in the world of causes and effects, that such an event might take place. Edward Gibbon, the famous historian of the Roman Empire, has observed,

"Placed on the verge of the two great empires of the East, Muḥammad observed with secret joy the progress of their mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs he ventured to foretell that, before many years should elapse, victory would again return to the banners of the Romans. At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire"

Continued on next page

a hundred camels from his heirs according to the terms of the bet, to which they complied and handed over the agreed number of camels.

Some versions of the incident state that before the *hijrah,* Ubayy Ibn Khalaf expressed his apprehension to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ that the latter might leave Makkah, and in such a situation he would not let him go unless he appointed a guarantor for himself. It was to ensure that when the period of the bet would expire, the guarantor should arrange to deliver a hundred camels. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ appointed his son, 'Abdur Raḥmān, as his guarantor.

When Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ won the bet according to the agreement and got hold of one hundred camels, he took them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who asked him to give them in charity (*ṣadaqah*). Abū Ya'lā has quoted these words in Ibn 'Asākir on the authority of Sayyidnā Brā' Ībn 'Āzib هٰذَا السُّحْتُ تَصَدَّقْ بِهٖ . That is, 'this is prohibited. Give it in charity (*ṣadaqah*).' (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

Gambling

Qimār, that is, gambling, is absolutely prohibited according to the categorical Qur'anic injunction. After *hijrah* to Madīnah when liquor was banned, gambling was also prohibited simultaneously. It was declared an act of Satan: إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ (The truth is that wine, gambling, altar-stones and divining arrows are filth, a work of Satan - 5:90) *Maysir* (مَيْسِر) and *Azlām* (أَزْلَام) are nothing but different forms of gambling, which have been prohibited in this verse.

Betting, in which money or commodities are placed on stake and won or lost according to conditions agreed, is also a form of gambling. The bet made between Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ and 'Ubayy ibn Khalaf was also a form of gambling. But this incident had happened before the *hijrah*, when the injunction for banning the gambling was not revealed. Therefore, the commodity won in this case was not *ḥarām* (prohibited).

(Gibbon, The decline and fall of the Roman Empire, chapter 46, vol. 2, p. 125, Great Books, V.38, published by the University of Chicago, 1990) Had it not been a news given by Allah Ta'ālā, nobody could have dared to predict such an unlikely event. In particular, it was impossible for a claimant to prophethood that he would put his future at stake by predicting an event that was so improbable. This foretelling, therefore, is one of the solid proofs of the prophethood of Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ. (Muḥammad Taqi 'Usmāni)

The question that arises here is that why did the Holy Prophet ﷺ ask Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ to give away the camels in charity when they were not haram (prohibited), especially when in some other versions of the *ḥadīth* the word *suḥt* is used, which is commonly understood as haram? The answer to this query, as given by the religious jurists, is that although at that time those camels were *ḥalāl* (permitted) but the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not like earning through gambling, even at that time. He therefore, asked Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ to give them away in charity, as they were below his stature. It is identical to the situation that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ did not taste liquor ever, even during the time when it was not prohibited.

As regards the use of the word *suḥt* (سُحت), in the first place the scholars of *ḥadīth* did not accept this narration as correct; and even if it is accepted as authentic, it should be kept in mind that this word has several meanings. One meaning is *ḥarām* (prohibited), and the other is abominable and undesirable. It is related in one *ḥadīth* that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "كَسْبُ الْحَجَّامِ سُحْتٌ that is, 'The earning of the one who undertakes treatment by cupping is *suḥt*'. The majority of religious scholars have taken the meaning of *suḥt* here as undesirable or disgusting. Imām Rāghib Iṣfahānī in his Mufradāt-ul-Qur'ān and Ibn Athīr in his Nihāyah have proved the different meanings of the word *suḥt* in the usage of Arabic language and *āḥādīth* of the Prophet.

Acceptance of this interpretation of the religious scholars is also necessary because if in fact these camels were *ḥarām*, then according to religious law this was to be returned to the person from whom it was taken. The commodity, which is *ḥarām*, can only be given in charity (*ṣadaqah*) under any one of the three situations: One, when the owner of the commodity is not known. Two, when it is not possible to deliver the commodity to the owner. And third, when there is any religious complication in the delivery of the commodity. واللہ سبحانہ و تعالیٰ اعلم

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ (And on that day the believers will rejoice with Allah's help - 30:4). The wording of the text apparently implies that "Allah's help" in this verse refers to His help for the people of Rūm. Although they too were disbelievers, yet compared to others, their *kufr* was light. Therefore, their being helped by Allah Ta'ālā was not a far-fetched thing, especially when it was a matter of happiness for the

Muslims.

The other possibility is that "Allah's help" in the above sentence means Allah's help for the Muslims, for which two explanations could be assigned. First, that Muslims had presented the victory of Rūm as a sign of the truthfulness of the Holy Qur'ān and the veracity of Islam. Hence, the victory of the Romans was in fact the victory of Muslims. The second reason for the help of Muslims could be that, there were two big powers of the disbelievers at that time – Persia and Rūm. By making them fight with each other, Allah Ta'ālā made them weak, which helped the Muslims defeat them later. (Rūḥ).[1]

يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ (They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent.-7). These disbelievers were quite conversant with the mundane needs, that is how to perform trading, which commodity should they trade in, where should they make purchases, where should they sell etc. Similarly, they knew well how to till, when to put seeds, and when to harvest. They were also equally knowledgeable about the construction of buildings and to furnish them with luxury goods. But they were totally ignorant and negligent about the other aspect of the worldly life which in fact is more important, and brings forth the real purpose of its creation; that is to appreciate that he is not a permanent resident of this world, rather his stay in the world is a temporary stay, like that of a visitor on a tourist visa. Man's permanent abode is in the Hereafter, and he has to collect here the goods for his comfort in the next life. The goods of comfort for the next life are the true faith and righteous deeds. This simple and straight-forward reality is not understood by these so-called intellectuals.

Another point worth consideration in this verse is about the wording

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1. There is yet another explanation of this verse offered by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ etc.They say that the news of the victory of Romans reached the Muslims the very day in which they defeated the pagans of Makkah in the battle of Badr. Therefore, the Muslims were delighted on their own victory when the news of the victory of the Romans added to their delight. According to this interpretation, "rejoicing of the believers with Allah's help" in the present verse refers to the victory of the Muslims in the battle of Badr, and the good news given by this verse is twofold; one, in relation to the Romans, and the other in relation to the Muslims themselves. (Muḥammad Taqi 'Usmāni)

used by the Holy Qur'ān in this verse. The word "*ẓāhiran*" with *tanwīn*, according to the Arabic grammar, indicates that even superficial things of the worldly life are not fully known to them;[1] what they know is only one aspect of it, while they are ignorant of its other aspects, and are totally negligent of the Hereafter.

Earning of mundane needs by neglecting the Hereafter is no sagacity

The Holy Qur'ān is full of admonitory stories of the world. Those who had earned a name for collecting all sorts of luxuries and comforts for themselves, and then their disastrous end was witnessed in this very world, will also be subjected to everlasting torment of the Hereafter. So no sane person will call them intellectual or sagacious. Unfortunately, in the present day world the height of sagacity and wisdom is attributed to the one who could accumulate the largest quantity of wealth, and arrange for himself the best of comforts and luxuries. He is called the most successful and wise, no matter how low he might be in his morals. To call such a person wise is indeed an insult to wisdom - both by religious and moral standards. By Qur'ānic standard, only those are wise who are conscious of Allah and the Hereafter, and strive for the comforts of the next life, keeping their needs of this wordly life at a level at which such needs are necessary; and do not make their achievement the sole purpose of their lives. The following verse depicts the same meaning: إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيٰتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللّٰهَ قِيَامًا وَّقُعُودًا وَعَلٰى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَاطِلًا ۚ سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for the people of wisdom, who remember Allah standing and sitting, and (lying) on their sides, and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying:) "Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. We proclaim Your purity. So, save us from the punishment of Fire."(3:190-191).

Verses 8 - 10

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِيٓ أَنفُسِهِم ۗ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا

1. This aspect of the language used by the Holy Qur'ān has been tried to be reflected in the translation above by the words, "something superficial " instead of "what is superficial".

بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ط وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَآئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ط كَانُوْآ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاَثَارُوا الْاَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوْهَا اَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوْهَا وَجَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ط فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْآ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسَآءُوا السُّوْٓاٰى اَنْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَكَانُوْا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾

Did they not reflect in their own selves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them but with a just cause and for an appointed time. And many of the people deny the meeting with their Lord. [8] **Have they not travelled on earth, so that they may see how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than these in power, and they had tilled the land and had made it more populous than these have made it, and their messengers had come to them with clear proofs. So Allah was not to do injustice to them, but they used to do injustice to themselves.** [9] **Then the end of those who did evil was evil, because they belied the verses of Allah and used to mock at them.** [10]

Commentary

The first two verses are an appendix and endorsement to the previous subject that these disbelievers are engrossed so much in the temporary mundane glitter and transitory pleasures that they have totally forgotten the real nature of this world and its ultimate end. If they had pondered over this, the secret of this world would have dawned upon them that the Creator of this universe has not created the sky and the earth, and the creatures in between, just for nothing. There is a great wisdom and purpose behind their creation, which is, that people should recognize the Creator through all His creations, and then get on to look for things that He likes and dislikes. Once they know His likes and dislikes, they should strive to please Him as much as possible, and avoid that which displeases Him. It is obvious that there should be rewards for good deeds, and

punishments for evil doings, because equating good with bad is against justice and fair play. One should also realize that this world is not the place where his good or evil acts may be recompensed in full. On the contrary, very often it is seen that the evil-doers thrive very well in this world, and the one who abstains from evils suffers the troubles and tribulations.

Therefore, it is necessary that a time should come when this system should come to an end, and a reckoning of good and evil acts of all the persons takes place, on the basis of which rewards and punishments are awarded. The time when this will come is called the Dooms Day and the Hereafter.

The gist of this discussion is that if the disbelievers had pondered over these things, then this very sky and earth and the creatures in between them would have testified that they were not permanent. They are here but for a short time, after which a new world is to come, which will be permanent. This is the essence of the first of the above verses. أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِيٓ أَنفُسِهِم (30:8) This was a matter of logical rationale. In the next verse worldly thinking and experiences are presented as a testimony, and the Makkans are addressed in the following words:

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ (Have they not travelled on earth - 30:9). It means that the Makkans live in a land where there is neither any cultivation and industry nor any tall and beautiful buildings, but for the sake of trade they do travel to Syria and Yemen. So, have they not seen, during the course of their trips, what was the fate of the earlier people, whom Allah Ta'ālā had endowed with skills to make use of the land? For instance, they had the skill to draw underground water by excavating the earth for irrigating fields and gardens, and dig out concealed precious minerals, such as gold and silver, and make use of them to their benefit. For their advanced skills and way of living, they were regarded as civilized nations. But they got engrossed so much in material life, transitory luxuries and comforts that they forgot Allah Ta'ālā and the Hereafter. Then, Allah Ta'ālā sent prophets and books to remind them of their duties, but they did not pay any heed. Ultimately, they were overtaken by Allah's wrath even in this world. The ruins of their desolate cities still stand witness to their destruction. At the end of the verse it is suggested to ponder whether they were subjected to any oppression from Allah Ta'ālā, or they subjected themselves to their own cruelty by

accumulating causes of the divine punishment.

Verses 11 - 19

اَللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَآئِهِمْ شُفَعٰٓؤُا وَكَانُوْا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَفَرَّقُوْنَ ﴿۱٤﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَهُمْ فِيْ رَوْضَةٍ يُّحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿۱۵﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَآئِ الْاٰخِرَةِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿۱٦﴾ فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ ﴿۱۷﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ ﴿۱۸﴾ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾

Allah originates the creation, then He will create it again, then to Him you are to be returned. [11] **And on the day the Hour (Qiyāmah) will take place, the sinners will despair.** [12] **And they will have no intercessors from among their (so-called) 'partners of Allah', and they themselves will reject their (such) 'partners'.** [13] **And the day the Hour (Qiyāmah) will take place, it will be on that day that they will turn into groups.** [14] **So, as for those who had believed and had done righteous deeds, they will be in a garden, extremely delighted.** [15] **As for those who had disbelieved and belied Our verses and the meeting of the Hereafter, they will be brought for punishment.** [16] **So, proclaim Allah's purity when you see the evening and when you see the morning.** [17] **And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon and when you enter the time of Ẓuhr (soon after the decline of the sun towards West).** [18] **He brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living, and gives life to the land after it is dead. And in similar way you will be brought out.** [19]

Commentary

فَهُمْ فِيْ رَوْضَةٍ يُّحْبَرُوْنَ (They will be in a garden, extremely delighted - 30:15).

Yuḥbarūn (يُحْبَرُوْنَ) is derived from *ḥubūr*, (حَبُوْر) which means happiness, joy, or delight. This word encompasses all types of delight, which the dwellers of paradise will draw from the bounties of Paradise. The Holy Qur'ān has not specified this, and has rather kept it generalized. At another place it is said فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّآ اُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ اَعْيُنٍ (32:17) that is, 'no one knows in this world what delight and joy is in store for them (the people of Paradise) in Paradise'. While explaining this verse some commentators have mentioned various delightful things, which all fall under the category of joy and delight.

فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

So, proclaim Allah's purity when you see the evening and when you see the morning. And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon and when you enter the time of Ẓuhr (soon after the decline of the sun towards West). (30:17-18)

The word '*subḥān*' (سُبْحَان) is an infinitive which means 'to declare the purity of someone from defects'. The phrase '*subḥānallāh*' (سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰه) is meant to proclaim Allah's purity from all defects. To recite this phrase with this intention is called '*tasbīḥ*'. But in general usage, the word '*tasbīḥ*' often includes all forms of worship and remembrance of Allah, like *ṣalāh, dhikr,* etc. In the present verse, a verb is understood before the infinitive '*subḥān*' which is meant to direct the addressees to make '*tasbīḥ*' which, in its general sense, includes all forms of remembrance of Allah, and *ṣalāh* in particular, as explained above. In the light of this explanation, the present verse, in its beginning, enjoins upon its followers that they should remember Allah in the morning and evening, and at the end of the verse, it is instructed that they should remember Him at the other two times, عَشِيًّا ، حِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ. One of these times is '*ashiyy*' (عَشِيّ) which is the name of the last part of the day, and here it refers to the time of *'Aṣr*; and the other time is when the sun starts declining towards West, that is Ẓuhr.

In the sequence of the present verse, evening is mentioned before morning, and the end of the day ('Aṣr) is mentioned before Ẓuhr. One reason of precedence of evening over morning is that in Islamic calendar evening precedes the morning, and the date changes at the sunset (Maghrib). For precedence of *'Aṣr* over *ẓuhr* one reason could be that at

the time of 'Aṣr, which is also called the middle (*wusṭā*) prayer, people are generally busy in their work, and hence, it is rather difficult to offer prayer at that time. This is why there is greater emphasis in the Qur'ān for offering 'Aṣr prayers حَافِظُوْا عَلَى الصَّلَوٰاتِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ الْوُسْطٰى (Take due care of all the prayers, and the middle prayer, - 2:238)

In the wordings of this verse the prayer (*ṣalāh*) is not specified as such. Hence, all types of worships, whether by actions or by word of mouth, are included in the meaning of the verse. Since prayer is supreme in all worships, it is included here on priority. It is for this reason that the scholars have stated that this verse has clearly described and defined the timings of the five prayers. Someone asked Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ whether the Qur'ān has specifically mentioned about the five prayers? He answered in the affirmative, and quoted this verse as a proof. Then explaining his point, he said that the words," when you see the evening" (حَيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ) are for *maghrib* prayer, "when you see the morning" (حِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ) for *fajr* prayer, "in the afternoon" (عَشِيًّا) for 'Aṣr prayer, "and when you enter the time of *ẓuhr*" (وحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ) for *ẓuhr* prayer. In this way, this verse has described the four prayers very clearly. As for the *'Ishā'* prayer, it is enjoined explicitly in the verse مِنْ بَعْدِ صَلٰوةِ الْعِشَآءِ (After the prayer of *'Ishā'* - 24:58). Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has opined that the words, "when you see the evening" include both *maghrib* and *'Ishā'* prayers.

Special Note

This verse is the *dhikr* of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ, which earned him the title of وَاِبْرٰهِيْمَ الَّذِىْ وَفّٰى (And Ibrāhīm who fulfilled his covenant - 53:37). Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ used to recite these words in the morning and evening.

It is reported from Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn 'Anas ﷺ with authentic proofs that the reason behind awarding the title of 'fulfilling his covenant' to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ was his recitation of this prayer.

Abū Dāwūd, Ṭabarānī and Ibn- us- Sunnī have reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about these two verses:

فَسُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ

وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ.

So, proclaim Allah's purity when you see the evening and when you see the morning. And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon and when you enter the time of Zuhur (soon after the decline of the sun towards West). He brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living, and gives life to the land after it is dead. And in similar way you will be brought out. (30:17-19)

That whoever will recite them in the morning, all shortcomings in his acts during the day will be repaired; and whoever will recite these verses in the evening all shortcomings in his actions during the night will be repaired. (Rūḥ).

Verses 20 - 27

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ مَنَامُكُمْ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَآؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ يُرِيْكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَيُحْيٖ بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ تَقُوْمَ السَّمَآءُ وَالْاَرْضُ بِاَمْرِهٖ ط ثُمَّ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً ق صلے مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ ق صلے اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ط وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ج وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ

الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ع

And it is among His signs that He has created you from dust, then soon you are human beings scattered around. [20] **And it is among His signs that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has created love and kindness between you. Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect.** [21]

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the difference of your tongues and colours. Surely in this there are signs for the persons of knowledge. [22] **And among His signs is your sleep by night and day, and your search for His grace. Surely in this there are signs for a people who listen.** [23]

And it is among His signs that He shows you the lightening which causes fear and hope, and that He sends down water from the sky, then He revives the earth with it after its death. Surely in this there are signs for a people who understand. [24] **And it is among His signs that the sky and the earth stand firm with His command. Then, when He will call you from the earth, by a single call, you will be coming out all at once.** [25] **And to Him belong all those in the heavens and the earth. All (of them) are obedient to Him.** [26] **And He is the One who originates the creation, then He will create it again; and it is easier for Him. And for Him is the highest attribute in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.** [27]

Commentary

After narrating the incident of the war between Rūm and Persia in the beginning of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, it was declared that the cause of the misguidance of the infidels and their heedlessness towards the truth was their excessive love for material life and paying no heed to the Hereafter. After that, any possible misgiving regarding resurrection on the Dooms Day and about the rewards and punishment after reckoning was clarified from different angles. Then it was suggested that one should, at the first place, look and ponder within his Self, and then should look around and note what had happened to the people who had lived before, and what

was their end. After that Allah's exclusive Omnipotence was described, in which no one is His partner. The obvious conclusion of all these facts and reasoning is that no one else but Allah is entitled to being worshipped, and what He has conveyed through His prophets about the Dooms Day, resurrection, reckoning, Paradise and Hell in the Hereafter should be believed in its totality. In the above verses six manifestations of His Omnipotence together with all-encompassing wisdom are described which are the signs of His incomparable power and wisdom. These realities are termed in these verses as "signs" which in the present context mean "signs of the divine omnipotence"

First sign of divine omnipotence

Man, the most distinguished among all creatures who is the ruler of the universe, is created from earth, which is the most inferior element among all the constituting elements of nature. Among the four well-known elements, that is water, fire, air and earth, the last named does not have the slightest sense, sensation or movement. All other elements have at least some movement, but the earth is devoid of that as well. However, this element is selected by Allah Taʻālā for the creation of humans. Iblīs (Satan) was misled by his arrogance as he regarded himself superior to man, since he is made of fire. What he failed to understand was that greatness and superiority is awarded by Allah Taʻālā. He is free to award it to any one He chooses.

Creation of man from earth is obvious with reference to 'Ādam عليه السلام, who is the father of all mankind. Since he was created from clay, the entire mankind, being his progeny, is created indirectly from clay. Every man's creation from earth may also be explained by saying that every man or woman is created from human sperm which is constituted by different ingredients. The origin of most of these ingredients is nothing but earth.

Second sign of the divine omnipotence

Allah Taʻālā has created women in the same genus as that of man and they are made their wives as life long partners. Men and women are created from the same matter, yet there is a world of difference in their built, appearance, looks, character, habits, morals, disposition etc. If one seeks to recognize God, even this creation provides an excellent example of His supreme power. The wisdom behind the creation of this particular

sex is said to be لِّتَسۡكُنُوٓاْ إِلَيۡهَا (So that you may find tranquility in them - 21). If one ponders, it becomes evident that all the requirements of men from women end up in drawing peace of mind, tranquility and comfort. The Holy Qur'ān has put all that in one word.

The verse has thus indicated that the total outcome of married life is peace of mind and comfort; the couple that enjoys it is successful in the object of its creation, while the family that is deprived of peace of mind and tranquility is unsuccessful in its married life. This is also true that the very foundation of a successful married life rests on a lawful marriage. If one probes into the societies that developed illicit ways of living together without the bond of marriage, he will certainly discover that the life of such people is devoid of peace and tranquility. Living like animals to fulfill lust may provide temporary pleasure, but not the lasting peace of mind and comfort one draws from a proper married life.

The object of married life is tranquility for which mutual love and affection is the key

The present verse has declared that the object of married life of man and woman is peace of mind. This could be achieved only when there is a mutual recognition of each other's rights and a sincere effort to fulfill them. Otherwise the demand for meeting one's own rights only will lead to domestic brawls and shattering of peace. One course for the fulfillment of these rights could have been to lay stress only on legislation and imposing laws, as has been done in the case of other rights of the people, where it is prohibited to usurp the rights of others and after due warnings the punishments have been prescribed, and it is advised to show sympathy and sacrifice toward others. However, it is a common experience that people cannot be corrected only by giving them a set of laws, unless they are accompanied by nurturing *taqwā* and Allah's fear in the hearts. That is why the Holy Qur'ān, whenever it gives any injunctions regarding the social life of man, comes with the directions of اِتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ، وَاخۡشَوۡا (Fear Allāh) as a complement to those injunctions.

Mutual relations between man and woman are of such a delicate and sensitive nature that neither a law can ensure the fulfillment of their respective rights completely, nor can any court do full justice to it. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has selected those verses of the Qur'ān for the *khuṭbah* (sermon) of *nikāh* in which stress is laid on piety,

fear of Allah and the Hereafter. Only these qualities in the spouses could stand as a guarantor for the fulfillment of mutual rights.

In addition to this, Allāh Ta'ālā has not made the conjugal rignts merely a matter of rules and regulations, but also a natural and emotional requirement of every man and woman. It is on the same pattern as the mutual rights of parents and children are safeguarded by the natural love they have for each other. Allāh Ta'ālā has filled the hearts of parents with such a natural love that they are compelled to protect their children more than their ownselves. Similarly, a degree of natural love is put in the hearts of children for their parents. The same thing is done in the case of spouses, for which it is said وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً (And He has created love and kindness between you - 30:21), that is, Allah Ta'ālā has not restricted the relationship between spouses to a legal and religious relationship, but has filled their hearts with love and compassion. The literal meaning of *wudd* and *mawaddah* is 'liking', which results in love and affection. Here Allah Ta'ālā has used two words – one is *mawddah* (love or friendship) and the other *raḥmah* (kindness). It is possible that *mawaddah* (love) refers to the young age when spouses are attracted towards each other with love and affection, while *raḥmah* refers to the old age when passions subside and compassion for each other takes over. (Qurṭubī)

After that it is said إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ (Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect - 30:21). Although this verse has mentioned only one sign, but at the end of the verse, the word 'signs' in plural is used. The reason for this is that conjugal relationship, which is being discussed here, has many aspects, religious and mundane benefits. If all these benefits are taken into consideration, it appears that this relationship contains a number of signs of the divine omnipotence.

Third sign of divine omnipotence

The people living on earth are divided into many races, having different physical features and colours. Some are white, while others are black, brown, and yellow. Rather many have multitude of in-between shades of colours, because of inter-marriages among those having different colours. They speak different languages with many different dialects. The creation of the sky and earth is no doubt a great Divine masterpiece, but the difference of 'tongues' between human beings is also

an equally astonishing Divine marvel. The difference of 'tongues' mentioned in this verse includes the difference of languages. There are hundreds of languages spoken in different parts of the world. Some of them are so much at variance from each other that there seems to be absolutely no link between them. Then, it also includes the difference of accents, pronunciations and the qualities of voices. Allah's omnipotence has created the voice of each individual distinguishable from that of the others. The voices of men are clearly distinct from those of women, and the voices of children, from those of aged people, and so on, although the apparatus of speech, i.e. the tongue, the lips, the throat etc. are the same in all human beings. تبارک اللہ احسن الخالقین .

The same way there are differences of colour and hue. It is seen that babies of different colour and hue take birth from the same parents under the same circumstances. All this is the marvel of Allah's creation. The wisdom behind the difference of colours requires a lengthy description which is beyond our scope, but many of these wisdoms can be easily understood by a little reflection.

While referring to this sign of the divine omnipotence, this verse has mentioned creation of many things, such as sky, earth, the difference of languages and dialects, difference of colour in humans, which are all signs of Divine wisdom and can be recognized and understood with little attention. Hence, it is added at the end of the verse: إِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ (Surely in this there are signs for the persons of knowledge - 30:22).

Fourth sign of divine omnipotence

Human sleep and economic activities both in daytime and at night have been mentioned in verse 32 as the fourth sign of Allah's omnipotence. Unlike some other verses, both night and day have been mentioned in this verse as times of sleep; similarly, economic activities are mentioned as activities performed both in daytime and at night. In other verses, sleep is described as something done at night, and earning of sustenance as an act of daytime. The reason is that the major purpose of night is to sleep, and some economic activities are also performed as a secondary function. The case of daytime is the opposite, where the major objective is to work, while a little time may be spent in having rest and sleeping. Therefore, both descriptions are correct. Some commentators have tried to interpret this verse in a way that sleep becomes restricted to

night and earning of sustenance to daytime, as mentioned in other verses. However, in the light of explanation given above, such a labored interpretation is not called for.

Sleep and economic activity is not against asceticism and trust in Allah

It is evident from this verse that sleeping at night and working at daytime is made a natural habit for the humans. It is not something that one has to cultivate, but is a natural gift bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā to all His creatures. The point can be proven by the fact that one cannot sleep at times despite making all possible arrangements for the comfort. Sometimes even the sleeping pills become ineffective. But on the other hand, when Allah wills, people go to sleep even on hard floors amidst severe hot and oppressive conditions.

The same principle applies to earning of sustenance. It is a common knowledge that two persons having equal opportunities, knowledge and intellect, and putting in equal efforts and skill for earning their livelihood, do not necessarily succeed equally. One earns more than the other, because it is decreed as such by Allah's wisdom. Therefore, one should try to earn the living through all the means available to him, but should not ignore the reality that the outcome of his endeavours depends on the will of Allah, as He is the real provider.

At the end of this sign of divine omnipotence it is said إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ (Surely in this there are signs for a people who listen - 30:23) Perhaps dependence on listening is placed here because it is commonly seen that the sleep takes over once one lays down in comfort. Similarly, one earns his living by putting in effort and labour in trade, services etc. But the hand of nature in their attainment is not seen by the ordinary eye. This fact is described and explained by the prophets of Allah. Hence it is said that these signs are beneficial for those who listen with care, and once the reality is understood, they accept it without obstinacy.

Fifth sign of divine omnipotence

Allah Ta'ālā shows the flash of lightning to people in which there is risk of its striking, thus destruction. At the same time, there is a hope for rain following the lightning. The rain does follow with His will and gives rise to numerous types of vegetation. At the end of the verse, it is said إِنَّ

إِنَّ فِى ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ (Surely in this there are signs for a people who understand - 30:24), because the mysteries of lightning and rain, and the resultant growth of vegetation can be understood by those with intellect.

Sixth sign of divine omnipotence

Existence of the sky and earth is by the command of Allah. When He will command the break up of this system, this strong arrangement, which is working since thousands of years perfectly without a slight depreciation, will end up in no time. Then by the command of Allah all the dead will assemble in the plain for reckoning.

The sixth sign of divine omnipotence is in fact the sum and substance of the previous five signs, and they were in fact revealed to explain and elaborate this verse. The subject of this verse continues in the next few verses.

لَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى (For Him is the highest attribute - 30:27) The word مَثَل *mathal* is used for any such thing which has resemblance and similarity with something else, but its being exactly like that is not necessary. Therefore, the Qur'ān has used the word *'mathal'* for Allah Ta'ālā at several places, as in this very verse, and in another but Allah Ta'ālā's Being is completely beyond resemblance. (That is why the word *'mathal'* has been translated above as 'attribute', which is also a possible lexical meaning of the word.)

Verses 28 - 40

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَّثَلاً مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۭ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَآءَ فِىْ مَارَزَقْنٰكُمْ فَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَآءٌ تَخَافُوْنَهُمْ كَخِيْفَتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَهْوَآءَ هُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّهْدِىْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيْفًا ۭ فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِىْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۭ لَاتَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ۙ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ مُنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوْهُ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ

وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا ۖ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ ۚ فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا ۖ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ رِبًا لِيَرْبُوَ فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُو عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۖ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ مِنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

He (Allah) gives you an example from your own selves: Do you have, from among your slaves, any partners in the wealth We have given to you, so as they and you are equal in it, (and) so as you fear them like you fear each other? This is how We explain the signs for a people who understand. [28] **But the wrongdoers have followed their desires without knowledge. So who can guide the one whom Allah leaves astray? And for them there are no helpers.** [29] **So, set your face to the Faith steadily, this (faith) being the nature designed by Allah on which He has created the mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the straight faith, but most of the people do not know.** [30] **(Set your face to the Faith) turning totally towards Him, and fear Him, and**

establish Ṣalāh, and do not be among those who associate partners with Allah [31] - among those who split up their religion and became sects. Each group is happy with what it has before it. [32]

And when the people are visited by some affliction, they invoke their Lord, turning totally towards Him. Then once He gives them a taste of His mercy, a group of them starts at once ascribing partners to their Lord, [33] that they become ungrateful for what We gave to them. So enjoy; then you will soon come to know. [34]

Or have We sent to them any authority that speaks to them about their associating partners with Him? [35] And when We give people a taste of mercy, they are happy with it, and if they are touched by an evil because of what their hands sent ahead, they are at once in despair. [36] Did they not see that Allah extends provision to whom he wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills)? Surely in this there are signs for a people who believe. [37]

So give to the kinsman his right, and to the needy and the wayfarer. That is better for those who seek Allah's pleasure. And those are the successful ones. [38] And whatever Ribā (increased amount) you give, so that it may increase in the wealth of the people, it does not increase with Allah; and whatever Zakāh you give, seeking with it Allah's pleasure, then such people are the ones who have multiples. [39]

Allah is the One who created you, then provided sustenance for you, then He will make you die, then He will make you alive. Is there any one from your (so-called) partners of God who does anything of that? Pure is He and far higher than what they associate (with Him). [40]

Commentary

The subject of Oneness of Allah has been dealt with in these verses by giving various proofs in different styles which are appealing to all types of people. At first, the point is explained by an example that although your servants and slaves are identical with you in looks, appearance, their make up of limbs and other physical features, yet you do not permit them

to share equally in your power and authority. You are not willing to part with the slightest part of your wealth and power in favour of your subjects, let alone sharing your power and possessions equally. They can neither spend wealth nor time the way they like, as you do. Just as you are scared of your insignificant partners while spending without checking with them, you do not allow even this position to your servants. So pause for a minute and ponder that human beings, angels, and all other things in the universe are created by Allah Ta'ālā and they are all His creations and slaves, then how could you take them as His equals or partners?

In the second verse a warning is sounded that although this argument is simple and straightforward, yet there are people who under the influence of their selfish motives do not accept and concede to anything of wisdom and knowledge.

In the third verse the Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed and through him the entire humanity is commanded to take note that when the irrationality and the unjust nature of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) is established, you should leave aside all trends of *shirk* and turn to Islam with full devotion. فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا (So, set your face to the Faith steadily - 30:30).

After that, it is elaborated in the following verse as to how Islam conforms to nature and meets its requirements: فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ (this (faith) being the nature designed by Allah on which He has created the mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the straight Faith - 30:30).

This sentence فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا (30:30) is the elucidation of the preceding sentence فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا (So, set your face to the Faith steadily - 30:30), and it also mentions a special trait of this Faith, for which it was commanded to be followed in the first sentence, that is, Islam is the religion of nature. Although the commentators have assigned different grammatical constructions to this sentence, yet all of them agree that "the nature designed by Allah" refers to the "straight Faith" that is ordered to be followed in the first sentence. "The nature designed by Allah" is explained in the next phrase that it is the natural design on which Allah has created all people.

What is meant by nature?

Commentators have given several interpretations to the word *fiṭrah*, (nature) used in the verse, out of which two are more common:

The first interpretation is that the word 'nature' is used here for Islam. Hence the meaning is that Allah Ta'ālā has made all human beings Muslim by their nature and instinct. In other words, all humans are born Muslims but it is the surroundings and the environment they live in make them astray from the righteous path. Generally it happens that the parents teach the child things and beliefs, which are contrary to Islam, and therefore he is misled into wrong beliefs. According to Qurṭubī majority of the elders agree with this interpretation, and it is also recorded in a *ḥadīth* of *Ṣaḥīḥain*.

The second interpretation is that 'nature' means here 'capability' or 'capacity'. If this meaning of the word 'nature' is adopted, the meaning of the phrase would be that Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed the capability to every human being to discern his Creator and believe in Him. This capability automatically leads to submission to Islam, provided one makes use of this Divine grace.

There are, however, some difficulties in adopting the first interpretation. Firstly, it is said in this very verse towards the end لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللهِ (There is no change in Allah's creation - 30). Here 'Allah's creation' means the same as 'the nature designed by Allah', which is mentioned earlier in the verse. Hence the meaning of this sentence would be that no one could change the nature designed by Allah, while a *ḥadīth* of *Saḥīḥain* itself says that the parents of a child make him Jew or Christian. If the meaning of nature is adopted as Islam, then how could the *ḥadīth* be correct in saying that the child changes later as a Jew or Christian when it is said in this very verse that the change is not possible. Moreover, this change is a common experience in that there are more disbelievers in the world than Muslims. If Islam is taken as the meaning of nature, in which any change is not possible, then how is it that there are so many disbelievers who have changed their natural instinct after their birth?

Secondly, it is stated in an authentic *ḥadīth* about the boy who was killed by Sayyidnnā Khaḍir ﷺ that infidelity was embedded in his

nature. It was for this reason that Sayyidnā Khaḍir عليه السلام killed him. In that case this *ḥadīth* is also in contradiction to the statement that all children are born on Islam.

Thirdly, if it is accepted that Islam is something embedded in human nature, and they have no control to change it, then it would not be a voluntary act. In that case there is no room for rewards in the Hereafter, because rewards will be awarded on voluntary good deeds.

Fourthly, the religious jurists have deduced from authentic *āḥādīth* that a child, before attaining puberty, is treated in this world according to the faith of his parents. If the parents are infidel, the child will also be taken as an infidel. If he dies, a minor he will not be buried according to Islamic rites.

Imām Torapushtī has listed all these doubts in his commentary on Maṣābiḥ, and has preferred the second interpretation of the word '*fiṭrah*' (nature) because of these difficulties. Also, it is appropriate to say that natural capability cannot be changed. The one who is misled by parents into infidelity does not lose his instinct to discern and comprehend Islam. In the case of the boy killed by Sayyidnā Khaḍir عليه السلام also, it is not true that he had lost the capability to discern the Truth because of his birth as infidel. Since a man makes use of this divine gift, i.e the natural capability, with his free will, the reason for his earning its reward is quite evident. By adopting the second interpretation, the statement of the *ḥadīth* of *Ṣaḥīḥain* also becomes clear, that although the child is born with the natural instinct to discern the Truth, which should lead him to accept Islam, yet his surroundings and parents make him a Jew or a Christian. As for the traditions of some elders (*salf*) who have explained the word '*fiṭrah*' (nature) by the word 'Islam', it seems that they have not used the word of 'Islam' in the meaning of the capability to comprehend and accept Islam. Muḥaddith Dehlavi رحمه الله تعالىٰ has explained the view of the majority of the Ummah in the same manner. (لمعات شرح مشکوٰة)

Hadrat Shah Walīullah Dehlavi رحمه الله تعالىٰ has also endorsed the same view in his book (حجة الله البالغة). The essence of his discussion is that Allah Ta'ālā has created innumerable things of various temperaments and disposition, and has placed an inherent quality in the nature of each one of them which helps him fulfill the object of his creation. The verse

اَعْطٰى كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلْقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰى (He who gave everything its shape, then guidance - 20:50) also describes the same reality that the Creator has instructed every creature how it should fulfill the purpose of its creation. Those instructions are embodied in the capability of performing required acts by various things. The instinct given to honeybee is to distinguish plants and flowers and make selection for drawing juice from them into its belly for storage in the beehive. The same way the humans are graced with a natural instinct and capability to recognize their Creator and submit to Him. This is what Islam is all about.

The above discussion has also clarified the meaning of the sentence لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ (There is no change in Allah's creation - 30:30) meaning no one can bring about any change in the instinct and capability bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā, which helps recognize the Truth. The wrong environment can make one an infidel, but cannot eliminate his inherent capability to recognize the Truth.

This explanation also makes the meaning of the verse clear, which says وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ (I have not created Jinn and mankind except to worship Me - 51:56). It means that Allah has created in their nature the inclination towards and capability to perform His worship. If they make use of this capability, they will never go wrong and astray.

It is obligatory to avoid the company of wrongdoers and evil society

Although in this verse the sentence لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ (There is no change in Allah's creation - 30:30) is in the form of information, which means that no one can change the nature designed by Allah, but it also contains a latent prohibition in the sense that this nature should not be tampered with. Therefore, it is inferred from this verse that one should avoid the situations that render the capability of accepting the truth ineffective or weak. Such situations generally emerge in an evil environment and bad company, or by reading books written by those having wrong beliefs, especially when the reader does not have extensive knowledge and information about Islam.

وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ (And establish Ṣalāh, and do not be among those who associate partners with Allah - 30:30). In the previous verse it was mentioned that the human nature is designed in a manner

that it has an inherent capability to accept the Truth. Now in this verse it is emphasized that establishment of prayer is the first requisite for the acceptance of Truth, because it is the manifestation of submission to Truth and practical affirmation of Faith in Islam. After that, it is said وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ (30:31), that is, 'Do not join those indulging in shirk (associating others with Allah), because they did not avail of their natural capability to accept the Truth. Their misdeeds are mentioned in the next verse which says, مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَكَانُوْا شِيَعًا (Among those who split up religion and became sects - 30:32) that is, these disbelievers are those who have created a difference between Natural Faith and the true religion, or they have alienated themselves from the Natural Faith, as a result of which they are divided into different sects. شِيَعًا : *Shiya'an* is the plural of شِيْعَة *shī'ah*. A group of people following a leader is called *shī'ah*. The fact is that the Natural Faith was based on the Oneness of Allah, by following which the entire human kind should have been one solid unit and one party. But it so happened that people split out from this unity and started following the personal views of their own leaders. Since the personal views and opinions of different people may always vary from person to person, different groups of people invented their own beliefs and religion. As a consequence, people were divided into various groups and sects, and the Satan made them believe that they were the only people on the right path كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُوْنَ (Each group is happy with what it has before it - 30:32). That is, each group is happy and contended in its own beliefs and declare others being wrong, although they all are astray and treading the wrong path.

فَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ (So give to the kinsman his right, and to the needy and the wayfarer - 30:38). In the preceding verse, it was stated that provision of sustenance is the sole prerogative of Allah Ta'ālā. He makes it abundant for whom He likes and curtails the sustenance whenever and whomever He so wills. It clearly gives the message that whoever spends it in the way of Allah, He does not make his sustenance dwindle. But if someone acts miserly and tries to accumulate what he has, then his possession does not expand.

In the background of this divine rule, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and according to Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى , every person privileged with abundance, is advised not to be close-fisted in spending the wealth Allah

has graced him with. Rather it should be spent on needy cheerfully. This spending will not result in shrinking of the wealth. Some avenues of spending have also been enumerated along with this advice. First, kinsman; second, *masākīn* (the needy); third travelers; that is, these categories should be given from the wealth that Allah has granted you. At the same time, it has been clarified that this is the right of these people which has been obligated on your wealth. Therefore, while giving it to them, no favour should be shown to them, because passing on someone's share to him is an act of fairness and justice and not a favour.

'Kinsman' in this verse apparently means common relatives, whether *maḥrams* or otherwise, as explained by the majority of the commentators. The words, 'his right' also refers to the rights of the kinsmen in general terms, and encompasses obligatory rights, such as those of parents, children and other close relations. It also includes voluntary acts of beneficence and charity, which carry greater rewards when done for close relations compared to when performed in favour of any other non-relative common person; so much so that the Imām of Tafsīr Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى has said that the charity of that person is not acceptable in the sight of Allah who neglects his own close relatives and gives it to someone else. It should also be understood that the right of close relatives is not restricted to financial support, but it includes looking after them, and providing any physical service to them as well. If nothing else is within means, they may at least be treated sympathetically and be consoled in their distress. Sayyidnā Ḥasan ﷺ has said that the one who enjoys abundance in wealth should help his close relatives with money, and the one who does not have it, should provide physical service and consolation verbally. (Qurṭubī).

After 'kinsman', the rights of indigent and then of the travelers follow. For meeting these rights also the same principle applies, that is if one has financial means, he should extend monetary help to them, otherwise physical service and consolation may discharge the right.

وَمَا اٰتَيْتُم مِّن رِّبًا لِّيَرْبُوَا فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ (And whatever Ribā [increased amount] you give so that it may increase in the wealth of the people, - 30:39). This verse is meant to correct an evil custom which is common in close relatives and the families at large. When people extend a gift or a present to relatives, especially at the time of marriages, they make a note of the

amount they have given, in the hope that they will get back an equal amount in return when it is their turn, rather a little more. This custom is known in Urdu as '*neota*'. It is emphasized in this verse that the instruction given in the preceding verse about the rights of relatives should be implemented in a manner that neither it be shown as a favour, nor should it be given in the hope of any return. Whoever gives out money in the hope that it will bring back something more, then it is not worthy of reward in the sight of Allah. Qur'ān has referred to it as *ribā*, alluding that it is as bad as usury or interest.[1]

Ruling

It is extremely contemptible for a person who extends a gift to someone that he expects a return for it, which is forbidden in this verse. But it is morally desirable for the one who receives a gift from someone, that he tries to give a gift to the former on his own accord, whenever he finds a suitable occasion. This was exactly the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He used to give present to the person who gave him one. (Qurṭubī on authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها). However, it should be avoided to give him an impression that the gift is being given in return of his own.

Verses 41 - 45

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِى الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِى النَّاسِ لِيُذِيْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ

1. This explanation is based on the view of a number of exegetes of Qur'ān. The word used by the Holy Qur'ān is *ribā*, a term commonly understood as equivalent to usury or interest, prohibition of which has been detailed in verses 275 to 281 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah and verse 130 of Sūrah 'Al 'Imrān. Since, according to a large number of scholars, usury was prohibited in Madinah,while the present verse is Makkan, the word *ribā* used here cannot mean usury or interest. Therefore, the word is interpreted here as a gift given to a relative in order to get back a gift of higher value from him. But some other commentators have taken the word *ribā* in the same sense as in Sūrah Al-Baqarah,i.e.usury and interest. They argue that usury was prohibited even in Makkah, but its implementation on a state level was carried out in Madīnah.The esteemed author has reconciled between these two views by saying that the direct purpose of the verse is to correct the evil custom of giving gifts in the hope of getting a higher return, as mentioned in some traditions, but the word '*ribā*' is used to indicate that this practice is tantamount to the practice of usury where an increased amount is charged from a debtor. (Muḥammad Taqi 'Usmāni)

الَّذِیْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِی الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِیَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّصَّدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِاَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ لِيَجْزِیَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Plight has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned, so that He (Allah) makes them taste some of what they did, in order that they may return (to the right way). [41] **Say, "Go about in the land and see how was the end of those who were before. Most of them were *Mushriks* (i.e. those who ascribe partners to Allah)".** [42] **Then set your face to the straight Faith before the arrival of a day that will never be repulsed by Allah. On that Day the people will be split apart.** [43] **Whoever disbelieves, his unbelief will be against him; and whoever acts righteously, then such people are paving the path for themselves,** [44] **so that Allah may reward those who believed and did righteous deeds, out of His grace. Surely He does not love the unbelievers.** [45]

Commentary

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِی الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِی النَّاسِ (Plight has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned - 30:41). The author of Rūḥ ūl-Ma'ānī has explained that the word '*fasād*' (translated in the text as 'plight') means all sorts of calamities, such as famine, epidemic diseases, frequency of the incidents of fire, drowning, lack of Allah's blessing in everything, and reduction in profits and incurring of losses in lucrative businesses. It can also be deduced from this verse that the cause of falling of calamities in the world is commission of sins and other evil acts by the people. *Shirk* (association of partners with Allah) and infidelity are the most severe of them all, and other sins follow after them.

The same subject has appeared in another verse with a difference وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ (42:30) that is, whatever troubles you are inflicted with are due to your own wrong doings. The essence of this statement is that whatever troubles and tribulations people face in this world are brought about by their own sins, despite the fact that many of these sins are pardoned, and many are punished but slightly, and yet some others are left unpunished. There are only a few sins that are punished by way of calamities. If all sins were punished with the intensity they deserve, no one would have been left alive in the world. But it is our good fortune that Allah Ta'ālā forgives so many of our sins and those which are not forgiven are dealt with very mildly, as stated at the end of the verse لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا (So that He (Allah) makes them taste same of what they did - 30:41) that is, He lets them taste a little of their evil deeds. After that, it is pointed out that whatever trouble and tribulation is sent down to them in this world, though as a result of their misdeeds, is in fact blessing and grace from Him, if only one could ponder. The purpose of these worldly troubles is to awaken them from their slumber, so that they get rid of their evil acts. This would naturally result in their favour and bring them blessings, as stated at the end of the verse لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (In order that they may return (to the right way). - 30:41).

Big calamities fall upon the world because of the sins of people

It is in this backdrop that some scholars have declared that if a man commits an evil deed, he harms the entire human kind, beasts, birds and other animals, because whatever calamities fall upon earth due to his sins, all others are also affected by it. Therefore, each one of the sufferers of the calamities will lodge a claim against the sinner on Dooms Day.

Shaqīq Zāhid has said that whoever acquires something unlawfully, he does not harm only the person whom he has taken it from, but also the entire human kind. (Rūḥ). It is because this opens up the door for others to follow, and thus the whole humanity gets involved in the practice. Secondly, this evil practice invites the calamities which in turn bring about troubles for every one.

Answer to a doubt

It is recorded in authentic *aḥādīth* that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'this world is a prison for the believers and heaven for the infidels.' He then elaborated that the infidels get the reward of their good deeds in this

world only in the form of wealth and health, whereas the reward of the believers is saved up to be awarded in the Hereafter. Furthermore, the believers in this world are like a branch of tree, which drifts from side to side in the breeze and stands still when the breeze stops; and ultimately they leave the world in this very condition. It is also stated that the worldly tribulations afflict the prophets most and then to those who are near to them, and then to those who are near to the near ones. اَشَدُّ النَّاسِ بَلَاءً الْاَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْاَمْثَلُ فَالْاَمْثَلُ (The most severe trials are faced by the prophets, then by those closer to them, then by those closer to them.)

Apparently, all these authentic *āḥādīth* seem to be in conflict with the statement given in this verse. Further, it is also a common experience that generally the Muslim believers live a difficult life, whereas the infidels and libertines live a comfortable and easy life. If the troubles and difficulties were afflicted because of sins, as mentioned in the verse, the situation would have been exactly opposite.

Answer to this quandary is that the verse under reference has mentioned the sins as a cause for inviting troubles, but not the only cause (علّت تامّہ) in the sense that whenever one is afflicted with troubles, it is only due to his sins. As a rule, if the cause of some happening comes to surface, its resultant effect normally follows. However, in certain cases the normal effect is overtaken by some other cause, suppressing or altogether eliminating the normal effect. For instance if someone says that purgatives are used for moving the bowls, the statement is true as far as the effect of purgatives is concerned. But sometimes they don't move the bowls under the effect of some other drug or an unknown reason. Similarly, it is also a common experience that at times antipyretics do not bring down the fever and the sleeping pills do not put one to sleep. Therefore, the upshot of the verse is that it is one of the traits of sins to invite troubles and tribulations, but sometimes due to other conflicting reasons, the troubles do not come about. On the other hand, the opposite of this can also happen at times, that is, troubles and tribulations may come about without commitment of sins, because their appearance without sins has not been ruled out in the verse altogether. Therefore, in the case of prophets and pious persons, calamities may visit them without sins. In such situations the cause of vexation is not sins, but for the sake of upgrading their status, tests and trials are conducted by putting them

into trouble.

Moreover, the Holy Qur'ān has assigned the reason for the troubles and tribulations as sins of people for such situations where these calamities engulf the whole world or the entire city, and all humans and animals are afflicted with that. Normally such calamities fall when sins are committed openly and freely. In the case of individual troubles and tribulations, this rule does not apply, because sometimes calamities befall for trials and tests, and when the individual passes the tests successfully, his position is raised in the Hereafter. In fact, such calamities prove to be blessings and graces of Allah Ta'ālā. Hence it is not correct to call a person sinner, if he is afflicted with calamity. In the same way, it is not apt to consider someone pious and righteous if he is affluent. However, the main reason for the affliction of major troubles and calamities, such as famine, storms, epidemics, inflation and lack of Allah's blessing is commission of sins openly and defiance of Allah's rule.

Special note

Hadrat Shah Waliyyullāh رحمه الله تعالیٰ has commented in (حجة الله البالغة) that there are two types of causes, in this world, for good or evil, trouble or comfort and difficulty or ease. Causes of the first kind are visible or outward, while causes of the second type are latent or inward. Outward causes are the material causes which are seen by all and normally regarded as such; whereas the inward causes are those based on human actions, which lead to either help from the angels or to their curse and hate. For example, the causes of rain before the scientists and philosophers are the formation of vapors in the form of clouds over the oceans due to heat, then their drift toward the land by the breeze, then their ascent to heights because of the heat of land, and then freezing of vapors after attaining heights into the cooler strata, and after being defrost by the heat of sun, their ultimate fall from the height in the form of water drops. But the *aḥādīth* on the subject tell us that this whole process is an act of the angels. In fact, there is no contradiction in the two statements as there could be many causes for any one process. Hence the outward cause in this case is the scientific explanation referred above, while the inward cause could be the action of the angels. When both these causes are combined, the rain falls according to need and expectation, and if both the causes do not combine, the rainfall may be interrupted.

Explaining the subject further, Shah Waliyyullāh رحمه الله تعالیٰ has said that some causes of the tribulations of the world are physical or biological, which do not recognize good or bad. For instance, it is the characteristic of fire to burn, without considering whether some one is pious or sinner, unless it receives a Divine command to act otherwise, as was the case in the fire of Namrūd, which was commanded to cool down and be tranquil for Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. The attribute of water is to drown the heavier bodies. So it will always act to perform this duty. Similarly, other elements are also performing their assigned jobs. For some, they become troublesome and arduous, but for others they bring in comfort and ease.

Like the outward physical causes, the good or evil deeds of a person are also effective in bringing troubles and tribulations or ease and comfort. When both outward and inward causes of ease, happiness and comfort join together, the person or a group of people enjoy ease and comfort in life. As against this, if the natural causes bring in distress and problems for an individual or a group of people and his or their actions also call for troubles and tribulations, then the calamities fall as a rule.

Sometimes it happens that whereas the material outward causes are working to bring about troubles and calamity, but the good actions of a person are inclined for ease and comfort in his life. In such a conflicting situation, the inward causes are consumed in countering the influence of the outward causes. As a result, the full benefit of his friendly inward causes is not reaped. Likewise, it happens sometimes that the material causes demand the ease and comfort, but the inward causes or his actions invite troubles and tribulations. In this conflicting situation also, neither full comfort and ease is available nor the calamities take their full toll.

In a similar manner, the material causes are sometimes made unfavorable for a prophet, saint or a pious to put him to test. If this explanation is understood properly, then the mutual harmony and consistency between the Qur'ānic verses and the referred *āḥādīth* becomes apparent, and any doubts about inconsistency or conflict are removed. واللہ سبحانہ و تعالیٰ اعلم

Difference between trial or test and punishment or torment when calamities fall

When the calamities fall, they are meant for trial and test for some

good people in order to atone their sins or raise their status, and for others to punish them for their sins. In both cases, the form of the calamities look alike. Then how should they be differentiated? Shah Waliyyullāh رحمه الله تعالى has said that the calamities on good people for the sake of tests can be recognized by their endurance with contentment, which is a gift of God. They remain happy and contented in troubles and calamities like a patient, who remains contented on his treatment by medicines of bitter taste or by a painful surgery. Not only that he does not complain of the pains he faced during treatment, but also pays fees for it and deploys all sorts of resources for getting himself treated in such a painful manner. As against this, the evildoers, on whom the calamities fall as punishment, take it to heart and cry and moan against the sufferings they are placed in. Sometimes they utter words of ingratitude to the extent of blasphemy.

Sayyidī Ḥakim-ul-Ummah Ashraf ʻAlī Thanāvi رحمه الله تعالى has given another distinction between the two calamities. If one becomes aware of his sins and faults and finds greater inclination toward seeking pardon from Allah Taʻālā, then it is a sign of His kindness and favour. But if one gets frustrated and indulges more in sins and evil, then it is a sign of Allah's wrath and torment. واللہ اعلم

Verses 46 - 53

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ الرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرٰتٍ وَّلِيُذِيْقَكُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَلِتَجْرِيَ
الْفُلْكُ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا ؕ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ
يُرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ فَتُثِيْرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهٗ فِي السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ
وَيَجْعَلُهٗ كِسَفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ فَاِذَآ اَصَابَ بِهٖ مَنْ
يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ اِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ
يُّنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَمُبْلِسِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ

كَيْفَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَرْسَلْنَا رِيْحًا فَرَاَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَاِنَّكَ لَاتُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ؕ اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾

And among His sings is that He sends winds giving good news (of rain), and so that He gives you a taste of His mercy, and that the ships may sail with His command, and that you may search for His grace, and you may be grateful. [46] **And We had indeed sent before you messengers to their people. So they came to them with clear proofs. Then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty. And it was due on Us to help the believers.** [47]

Allah is the One who sends the winds, so they stir up a cloud, then He spreads it in the sky however he wills and makes it (split) into pieces. Then you see the rain coming out from its midst. So, once He makes it reach the ones He wills from His slaves, they start rejoicing, [48] **even though they were absolutely hopeless before it was sent down to them.** [49] **So, look to the effects of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death. Surely That (Allah) is the One who will give life to the dead. And He has the power to do everything.** [50] **And should We send a (harmful) wind, and they see it (the tilth) turning yellow, then they will turn ungrateful, even after all the aforesaid (bounties of Allah).** [51] **So, you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they turn their backs in retreat.** [52] **And you are not (able) to show the blind the right path against their straying. You can make none to hear except those who believe in Our signs, hence they submit.** [53]

Commentary

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا ؕ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (Then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty. And it was due on Us to help the believers. -

30:47). This verse tells us that Allah Ta'ālā has taken it upon Himself to help the believers. On the face of this statement, one would have expected that Muslims would never be defeated against the infidels. But on many occasions, results have been exactly opposite. Answer to this confusion is at hand in this very verse, that by the word 'believers' those believers are intended who fight with infidels purely for the sake of Allah. Allah Ta'ālā takes revenge of only such believers from the criminals and helps them overpower their adversaries. Wherever the position is different, it is due to some sort of slip on the part of the believers, as Qur'ān itself has quoted about the battle of Uḥud: إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوْا (Satan had but made them slip for some of their deeds - 3:155). Even in such a situation, Allah Ta'ālā graces them with victory and upper hand, once they realize their fault, as it happened in the battle of Uḥud. As for such people who are Muslims only by name and are habitual defiant and negligent of the teachings of Islam, and are not penitent even when the infidels gain upper hand, they are for sure not included in this promise of Allah Ta'ālā, and do not qualify for His help. Nonetheless, Allah Ta'ālā provides help by His grace on many occasions without any one deserving it. Therefore, it is always beneficial to beg for His mercy and hope for His help.

فَإِنَّكَ لَاتُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى (So you cannot make the dead to hear - 30:52). As for the issue whether the dead have the ability to hear or not, and if they have this ability, whether it is exclusive to some, or all can hear, this subject has been dealt with briefly in the commentary of Sūrah An-Naml in this volume, and a detailed discussion can be seen in my book تکمیل الحبور بسماع اهل القبور.

Verses 54 - 60

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ ضُعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضُعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضُعْفًا وَّشَيْبَةً ؕ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْقَدِيْرُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۙ مَا لَبِثُوْا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَانُوْا يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِىْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ ؗ فَهٰذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ

لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يَنفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
وَلَئِن جِئْتَهُم بِآيَةٍ لَّيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾
كَذَٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ
وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Allah is the One who created you in a state of weakness, then He created strength after weakness, then created weakness and old age after strength. He creates what He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful. [54] **And on the Day when the Hour (Qiyāmah) will take place, the sinners will swear that they did not remain (in the graves) more than one hour. In the similar way they used to be contrary (to truth in their worldly life).** [55] **And those who are given knowledge and belief will say, "You remained, according to the destiny written by Allah, up to the Day of Resurrection. So this is the Day of Resurrection, but you had no belief."** [56] **So, on that Day, their apology will not benefit the wrongdoers, nor will they be asked to repent.** [57]

And surely We have given in this Qur'ān all kinds of examples for the benefit of mankind. (Still) if you bring to them a sign, the disbelievers will certainly say, "You are nothing but men of falsehood." [58] **Thus Allah seals up the hearts of those who do not believe.** [59] **So, be patient. Surely Allah's promise is true, and let not those who do not believe make you impatient.** [60]

Commentary

Greater part of this Sūrah aims at removing the doubts of the deniers of the Hereafter. For meeting this end, many verses deal with the signs of Allah's omnipotence and His all-encompassing wisdom in order to awake people from their slumber. The first of the above-referred verses deals with the same subject in a different manner. It is pointed out that man is impetuous by nature, in the sense that he gets involved in the present so much that he forgets the past and the future. This habit leads him to many a serious problems. When he is young, his strength is at its peak,

and he does not care about anyone in his over-weaning pride. He finds it difficult to remain within limits. In order to warn people, this verse has given a complete picture of the strength and weakness in human life as they come and go by. It is pointed out in the verse that the man starts his life in a state of weakness and ends it with a similar weakness. It is only in the middle of his life that he gains strength for a short period. It is in his own interest that he should keep in mind the impending weakness while he is still strong, and does not forget how he achieved strength gradually from the state of weakness.

The man is reminded of his real self in خَلَقَكُم مِّن ضَعْفٍ (Who created you in a state of weakness - 30:54). It means that his original base is a dirty drop of semen that has neither strength, nor sense or life. So ponder, who has turned this sickening drop into congealed blood, then into flesh and then transfixed bones into the flesh? After that, who has produced delicate machines of the limbs and organs to turn him into a mobile factory, which is supported by innumerous automatic machines. If one is to look more closely into this factory, one would notice that it is a mini-world of its own in which innumerable models of His creation are set in. The creation and bringing up of man is not brought about in a giant factory but in three dark stages in the womb of his mother. After spending nine months in the womb of mother, man ultimately takes birth to come out into this world. The Holy Qur'ān says, ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (Then Allah facilitated exit [from the womb] for him - 80:20).

When he came into this world, his condition was that وَاللّٰهُ اَخْرَجَكُم مِّنْۢ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ (And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing - 16:78). Then Allah made you learn so many things. The first lesson was to teach you crying, so that you could attract the attention of your parents towards you, and they should look for your needs of thirst and hunger. Then you were taught the skill to suck milk by pressing your lips and gums from your mother's breasts for your sustenance. Who else had the power to teach these two skills to an infant having no intelligence, to meet all his needs? Indeed no one else but the Power who is responsible for his creation. The infants are weak at that stage of their life. Minor exposure to cold or heat makes them sick. They can neither ask for their needs, nor can they remove any of their miseries. Right from this stage until they attain their youth, one can see

in them a gradual development of life and strength - a process only Allah Ta'ālā can create and control and a clear manifestation of His omnipotence, if people could only contemplate.

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً (Then He created strength after weakness - 30:54). When man reaches the stage of his strength, he gets involved in showing off his powers and intelligence. He flies to reach the moon and Mars, and tries to overpower the earth and oceans. He forgets all about his past and becomes oblivious of his future, and cries out مَنْ اَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً (Who is stronger than us in might? - 4:15); so much so that in this state of intoxication, he even forgets his Creator and His commands. So the Nature has warned to make him realize his folly ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضُعْفًا وَّشَيْبَةً (Then created weakness and old age - 30:54). O remiss! Be mindful of the fact that your present strength is temporary and you have to return to the same old weakness, and it will take you gradually to your grey hair. Then all your limbs and organs will change their shape and form. You need not go through any books and the history of the world, but look into your own concealed self, and you will be left with no other option but to accept and believe that يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْقَدِيْرُ (He creates what He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful - 30:54). All this control and running of affairs are by the One who creates them. He does as He pleases, and in a manner as it pleases Him. He has no parallel in knowledge and power. Knowing all this, is there any room for doubt that He can resurrect the dead whenever He likes?

After this, the falsehood and ignorance of the deniers of the Dooms Day is mentioned وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ مَا لَبِثُوْا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ that is, 'When the Dooms Day will come, these deniers of the Dooms Day will start swearing by losing senses after looking at the horrid scenes, that their stay was not more than one hour'. It is probable that the stay referred to here is the stay in this world, because they spent the time in this world in comfort and ease. And when they will encounter troubles in the Hereafter, they, by way of a natural habit of man to regard the comfortable period of his life very short, will swear that they lived in the world hardly for one hour.

The other probability is that this 'stay' is their stay in graves and *barzakh*. In that case, the meaning would be that they had thought that their stay in graves, that is *barzakh*, would be very long and the Dooms Day would come after a long period, but it would seem to them that they

stayed in *barzakh* for a very short time, and the Day of Judgement dawned too early. The reason for this feeling is that they will not find any comfort for themselves in the Hereafter, rather it will bring nothing but problems for them. And it is human nature that when he is taken over by problems, he considers the time previously spent in comfort being very short-lived. Although the *barzakh* is also a place of punishment for the infidels, yet it is much lighter as compared to what they will come across in Qiyamah. Hence they will regard the period of *barzakh* as very short and swear that their stay in it was brief.

Would any one be able to lie before Allah on the Day of Resurrection?

It is revealed in this verse that the infidels will lie on the Day of Resurrection in their swearing that they did not stay in the world or *barzakh* for more than an hour. It is also revealed in another verse that the disbelievers will say on oath that they were not disbelievers وَاللّٰهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِيْنَ (By Allah, our Lord, we ascribed no partners to Allah - 6:23). What needs to be understood here is that it will be Allah's court on the Day of Resurrection, and He will allow all and sundry to say whatever one wishes to say, whether one lies or speaks the truth. Allah is All-Knowledgeable and is not dependent on any one to find out what is false and what is true. When any one will speak a lie, his mouth will be sealed, and his skin, hair and limbs will be asked to give evidence. They will relate the truth in full detail, after which the liar will be left with no excuse. The verse اَلْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلٰٓى اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَآ اَيْدِيْهِمْ (Today We set a seal on their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us. - 36:65) means the same. Some other Qur'ānic verses reveal that there will be different occasions for the appearance of human beings before Allah Ta'ālā on the Day of Resurrection. On one such occasion, no one will have the right to speak without permission from Allah Ta'ālā, and he will have to speak nothing but truth. It will not be possible for him to speak a lie, as stated in the verse لَايَتَكَلَّمُوْنَ اِلَّا مَنْ اَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (They shall speak not, save him to whom the All-Merciful has given leave, and who speaks aright - 78:38).

No one will be able to speak a lie in the grave

As against this, it is related in some authentic *āḥādīth* in regard to questions and answers in the grave that when it will be asked from the infidels 'who is your Lord?' and 'who is Muhammad ﷺ?' they will answer هَاه هَاه لَا اَدْرِى That is 'Alas! I do not know any thing'. If it were possible to

speak a lie, he would have said 'Allah is my Lord' and 'Muḥammad ﷺ is His Prophet.' It looks rather strange that infidels are capable of speaking lies before Allah Ta'ālā, but not before the angels. But when it is looked at deeply, the explanation is simple, that is the angels neither have the knowledge of the unknown nor can they seek evidence from the limbs to confute the liar. If they had the capability of speaking lies before the angels, then all infidels and sinners would have been carefree about the torment of the grave. On the other hand, Allah Ta'ālā knows even the secrets of hearts, and also has the power to elicit evidence from the limbs and organs for exposing the liars. Therefore, allowing this freedom on the Day of Resurrection will not interfere with the rule of justice. والله اعلم

Sūrah Ar-Rūm was completed by grace of Allah on 28th of Dhulqa'dah, 1391 Hijrah.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ar-Rūm
Ends here.

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